

Gestures Speak Louder than Words:  
A Reflection on the Process of  
*Contact: A Mimed Imagining of*  
*Orpheus and Eurydice*

By Hilary N. Asare

Senior Honors Thesis for the Department of Drama & Dance  
Advised by Sheriden Thomas and  
Professor Barbara Wallace Grossman

## Introduction

I started dancing at the age of 4. I was never on the professional track, but it was always important to me to keep studying dance. Between age 4 and 16, I took ballet, modern dance, jazz dance, tap, and hip-hop. Puberty created a schism in dance training. I loved dancing, but my body was now very far from the traditional dancer shape, and that held me back at the studio where I took classes. I gave up dance classes my junior year of high school so that I could focus on schoolwork and plays. I missed it dearly and took the occasional summer class in efforts to keep that part of me satisfied.

When I came to Tufts University, my background in dance got me cast in my first show, *Big Love*. I learned a lot of stage combat alongside some traditional choreography. It was an incredible experience and it was the first time I was cognizant of how my body can tell a story even if I do not have any lines. Oddly enough, I had a harder time connecting my movement with my voice, and it took a long time for me to be at ease and aligned with my body while acting. The Viewpoints training in Acting II helped me address that problem. Viewpoints created a beautiful middle ground between strict acting and dance for me.

As I learned more about viewpoints, I was exposed to Boston's only collegiate mime troupe: HYPE! I was blown away by their shows. Everything was so specific and clean. They told all kinds of stories and the intentions were not lost without words. I had no idea that miming had so many possibilities. I auditioned and was accepted into the troupe in the spring semester of my sophomore year and I quickly realized that the core of the troupe was not just razor-sharp technique, but also a refined sense of storytelling. HYPE! operates mainly in the realm of pantomime, which is characterized by behavioral gestures and is essentially acting without words or props.

My semester at BADA further honed my movement skills. I did get the chance to do a little bit of mime in movement class, but the largest takeaway for me was the contact improvisation work we did. Contact improvisation is a type of movement that requires the people working to maintain physical contact at all time. Exercises range from things like Simon Says to Body Surfing. Our instructor stressed the importance of professional actors being ready and willing to make intimate contact on demand, which was something that had not crossed my mind.

When I decided to follow through with Professor Barbara Grossman's suggestion to do a mime performance piece as a senior honors thesis, I knew immediately that I would need an ensemble to work with or to direct. What makes HYPE!'s storytelling so dynamic is the energy exchanged between everyone onstage. Watching one person interact with an intangible world becomes dull rather quickly. The next question became "How is this project different from HYPE!?" The structure of a HYPE! show is a series of unrelated vignettes set to music. The skits are relatively short. They are on average no longer than 5-7 minutes. The idea of length stood out to me. How long can you watch people not speak? Does long-form pantomime exist? Why are the stories that HYPE! chooses to tell so short? What kind of stories would warrant long-form pantomime?

This line of questioning led me to my overarching goal: to successfully create a dramatic narrative using long-form pantomime alongside various movement practices, mainly viewpoints and contact improvisation. I divided the criteria for determining the success of this endeavor into three subsets. For the actors, I aimed to align their bodies with their acting. For the audience, I aimed to make the abstract and non-traditional as entertaining as it is thought-provoking. For myself, I aimed to create and realize a complex narrative that explored the realms of things not

easily said with words. After all, movement was a mode of communication long before words were.

### **Finding the Story**

After clarifying what I intended to accomplish, I needed to find the story I wanted to tell. I started with reading short plays and stories but quickly realized that their cores were intertwined with the language they use. I needed tales less rooted in words and that led me to fables and mythology. I have always enjoyed the Greek Classics, so I started to look there. When I was younger I read the myths repeatedly and in high school I started my love affair with Sophocles and Aeschylus. The language of the Greek Classics is artfully constructed, but the stories are action driven so they can serve as the source material for a physical piece.

At the same time as I conducted this search, I was interning for SpeakEasy Stage Company. They were gearing up for their next season, and they had all of the interns read the plays they were doing over the next year. Sarah Ruhl's "The Vibrator Play" was the first play in the lineup. I was fascinated by her writing style and I sought out more of her work on my own time. I discovered she had written a play based on the Orpheus and Eurydice myth with a focus on Eurydice's experience in the underworld. The play had a lyrical quality to it I could not ignore. I began to seek out the different versions of the myth to see how much variation there was from one rendering to the next.

The first thing I noticed was how truncated most of the interpretations were. I could not find specifics about how the two lovers met or what Eurydice's family was like. There are scores of descriptions of how beautiful Orpheus' lyre playing is and how all women swooned upon hearing his music, but I wanted to know why he chose Eurydice. The need to provide answers to

these queries made it clear to me that this was the myth I had to tell. And so after reading all of the versions I could find, I began to construct my action plot.

### **Action Plot**

#### ***Characters:***

**Orpheus-** Alex Cook

**Eurydice-** Madeline Hall

**Eurydice's Little Sister-** Serena Chang

**Eurydice's Mother-** Corinne Segal

**Charon (boatman)-** Cantwell Muckenfuss

**Gollums-** Ben Jaye & Avery Stern (2/23 to 3/30) & Ryan Willison (3/30 to 4/26)

**Hades-** Ben Leatham

**3 Fates & Cerberus-** Emma Shakarshy, Kevin McDonald, Emily Henry

Open in silhouette. The ensemble is scattered on stage, and Orpheus and Eurydice stand on opposite sides of the stage facing one another. The ensemble does a gesture cycle of separation and longing. Orpheus and Eurydice move closer to each other taking one or two moments of stillness. When they reach center and almost connect, the ensemble forms two swarms and move between the lovers, sending them in opposite directions. The ensemble assumes new positions and becomes a maze that moves to keep Orpheus and Eurydice from each other. When Eurydice and Orpheus stand on opposite sides of the stage facing each other again, Eurydice reaches for him and lights black out.

Lights up on a riverbank. Eurydice's mother and other women do the washing while Eurydice braids her little sister's hair. Orpheus enters with his lyre. He sits and begins to strum. The ladies moon over him, each one desperately trying to catch his attention but he is focused on Eurydice, who has not stopped braiding the younger girls hair despite the girl's twisting about in childish attempts to flirt with Orpheus. She is smiling because the music is beautiful, but he is baffled at his inability to woo her without effort. Eurydice's mother sees all of this, and decides

to play matchmaker. She orchestrates a hasty exit with the washerwomen and her youngest daughter, leaving Eurydice alone with an extra sheet to wash.

Orpheus inches closer as Eurydice washes the sheet. As she stands to wring it out, Orpheus sets down his lyre to help her. They fold and as they finish, Orpheus takes it and sets it on the ground for Eurydice to sit on so he can play for her. She is annoyed, but charmed and sits. He starts to play again but notices that she is growing bored. He decides to hand her the lyre. She strums and it is clear she does not know what she is doing. Embarrassed, she attempts to leave but Orpheus stops her and teaches her. They share a moment of sweetness and Eurydice remembers that she should probably head home. She stands up and begins to walk. Orpheus decides to walk with her. They walk for a while before Orpheus awkwardly grabs Eurydice's hand. She takes it back out of shock, but then gently takes his hand again. Lights transition to sunset/ twilight and they sit for a bit. They shift their seated positions three times until they are both cross-legged with their knees touching. Orpheus takes Eurydice's hand and kisses it tenderly. Eurydice's reciprocates the action. They lock eyes, kiss, and cuddle.

Light and music changes signify the flash-forward to Eurydice and Orpheus's wedding scene. There is a ritual that is characterized by upward movement, joyous dancing, and a community blessing. After the ritual ends and the ceremony begins, Eurydice's little sister stops paying attention and starts stalking a snake in grass. She mimics its movement until she takes her seat. The girl keeps pointing at the snake as the wedding continues. She follows the snake up to Eurydice's feet and at the moment of the wedding kiss, the snake bites Eurydice. She picks up her leg quickly and checks to see what happened. Upon seeing that it is a snakebite, she blanches. As Orpheus attempts to look down she brings his face up to hers as if to tell him something and starts to fall.

Orpheus catches her but by the time he lays her down, it is too late; she reaches for his face, and the rest of the action stops to let the moment expand. Eventually her hand falls.

Orpheus cannot accept her death. He shakes her until Eurydice's mother stops him. Orpheus is shattered. He begins to pace until his pace becomes a run and he exits. Eurydice's mother folds Eurydice's arms, gives her a kiss on the forehead, and takes her younger daughter away from the sight of her sister. The priest does a blessing to release her soul and the wedding guests lift Eurydice and begin to walk her at chest level.

Lights change as the guests carry her upstage center. This is Eurydice's descent into the underworld. It will be an abstract deprogramming; a removal of her memories from her previous life. It should happen the way water melts ice on a window, with Eurydice as the ice. The ensemble will shed their characters and become echoes of the grieving process. They set her down feet first. She stands in stillness, confused and frightened, as the echoes walk across the stage. She squeezes her eyes shut hoping they will be gone when she opens them. They scoop her up again and set her down. She tries to get their attention, to explain she does not belong, but the argument is getting harder to form, the reasons for her resistance become foggy. Every echo she stops washes another part of her memory away. She starts to repeat her last living gesture of reaching for Orpheus, but she cannot quite remember what the gesture means. They quickly sweep her up and set her down once more. She continues to search for the gesture as the echoes form a vertical bed behind her. She lies back onto the mimebuilt bed and rolls over to reach for Orpheus. At that moment the bed disassembles to lift her up and carry her back to upstage center. She faces the audience while airborne as she reaches forward. When she is set down, the echoes use gestures to turn her back to the audience and give the impression of washing away the last remnants of her memory. When she turns around, no trace of her is left. Lights fade as she begins

to walk forward.

Lights rise on a mimebuilt forest, Orpheus runs onstage with his lyre in hand. Refusing to accept Eurydice's fate he travels to the underworld. The light should be warm as Orpheus begins to mime walk. The trees progress from dense and neutral to sparse and wizened as he approaches the underworld. There is one line of trees upstage of Orpheus and one line of trees downstage of him. The more wizened trees reach out and hit him. The lights will shift to a darker cool color suggesting nighttime and the underworld. A tree made of two or three people will shuffle and as Orpheus approaches it they will form an opening. Orpheus will crouch to enter and the lights will fade.

Lights up as Orpheus enters to a different riverbank. Charon is still and statuesque center stage in his boat. Orpheus crouches by the water leaning against a rock. He fiddles with his lyre then and dips his hands in the water to wash his face. A soul approaches and this animates Charon. As he stirs, Orpheus realizes that he should play dead. He hides his lyre behind the rock and dashes behind the soul, mimicking his actions and holding his breath. Charon approaches the two, and takes pause; he only senses the approach of one dead soul. He continues and bangs his staff on the ground in front of the soul and this causes the soul's mouth to fall open. Charon plucks the coins out of his mouth and turns to store them in a mimed pocket. He then helps the soul unto the boat. As his back is turned Orpheus takes in a deep breath. Charon moves over to Orpheus and bangs his staff on the ground, Orpheus does not respond. Charon tries twice more and then reaches for Orpheus's face but Orpheus can no longer hold his breath and he gives himself away. Charon is taken aback. Choosing to ignore this living soul rather than risk getting in trouble, Charon turns his back on Orpheus and guides the soul into his boat. Orpheus tries to grab him and catch his attention but Charon pushes him away with his staff and starts to row



away. Orpheus grabs his lyre and begins to play. Moved by his song of lament, Charon stops rowing and finally agrees to take him on to the boat. As they travel down the river, the space becomes narrow and cramped. It opens up again as they reach the shore. Orpheus and the soul disembark and begin to walk forward but Cerberus (mimebuilt) enters and threatens to devour Orpheus. Orpheus uses his musical talents to put the beast to sleep. He sneaks past the sleeping three-headed dog, exiting the stage as lights fade. The actors playing Cerberus transform into the three Fates and start the climb up to an elevated position stage left in a blackout.

Lights rise on Hades' palace. Hades is elevated above the Fates but stage right. He sits on a throne and the Fates spin and cut threads of life, each cut prompting another body to cross the stage. The dead are expressionless. They are not in heaven or hell. This afterlife is an eternal void; the concepts of pain and pleasure no longer exist. It is their task to walk for eternity, not their punishment. After two to three crosses, Eurydice enters. Orpheus runs to her but the sensation from touching her is unpleasant, cold, unsettling, and forbidden. Her holds her hand in hopes she will recognize him, but she does not. She exits and the crosses continue.

Hades sits smugly on his throne. Outraged, Orpheus orders him to release her and Hades laughs. Brashly and stupidly, Orpheus charges Hades. Hades swiftly catches Orpheus by the throat, reminding Orpheus that he is a god and that a mere mortal should have better sense than that. The furies eagerly spin Orpheus a thread and prepare to cut it as Hades tightens his grip, but Hades releases him and Orpheus falls to his knees. The Fates are disappointed. He begs for Eurydice's soul but Hades no longer responds, the ordeal is no longer amusing to him. Eurydice enters again and Orpheus has the idea to play his lyre to bring her memory back. He plays and sings to her louder and harder with no avail. Suddenly, Hades freezes Eurydice and stops Orpheus's frantic strumming. The song has moved him and the Fates. Hades stares Orpheus

down for a beat and then raises a hand. Hades crosses to Orpheus and turns him around so that he stands directly in front of Eurydice. Hades then awakens Eurydice. It is like coming out of anesthesia; she is groggy but noticeably more cognizant of her surroundings. Orpheus hesitantly starts to turn but Hades stops him. Hades summons two of the souls and uses them to explain the terms of Eurydice's release. He clearly indicates that if Orpheus looks at her before they both leave the underworld, she comes back for good. Hades sends them on their way and they begin to walk. Hades smirks and transforms two souls into Gollum-like creatures and instructs them to follow. Lights fade on the grinning Hades.

Eurydice and Orpheus enter walking briskly. Orpheus falters for a moment and almost looks behind him, but decides to keep moving forward. Eurydice cannot quite keep up with Orpheus' pace. The closer she gets to world of the living, the more she remembers. The Gollum-like creatures enter and attempt to trick Orpheus into looking at her. Orpheus stares them down and they back off and retreat offstage. In this moment of stillness, Eurydice recognizes Orpheus. She smiles and lurches forward to touch him but as she moves forward, Orpheus takes off again and exits. Eurydice follows him.

Lights shift to a warmly-lit stage with one entrance and a small part around it cast in the cold colors of the underworld. The Gollums transform into pillars on either side of said entrance. Orpheus enters first and, excited upon seeing the light, rushes in and turns to hold his hand out to her a moment too soon. The music goes silent. Eurydice is in shadow. She has remembered enough to feel the pain of losing him twice. Orpheus is paralyzed. They lock eyes long enough for her to reach out for him, and then a pillar springs to life and carries her down and out of the entrance. The other pillar becomes a barrier.

Orpheus bucks against the wall. He picks up his lyre and starts to play hoping the wall

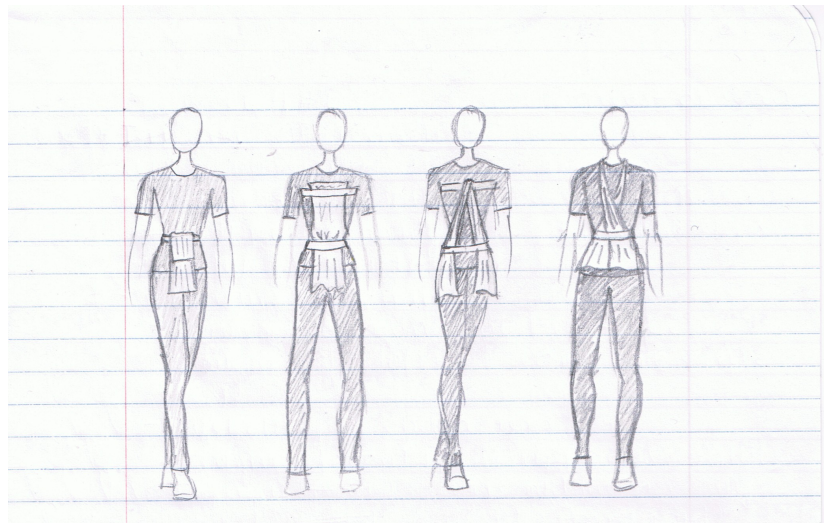
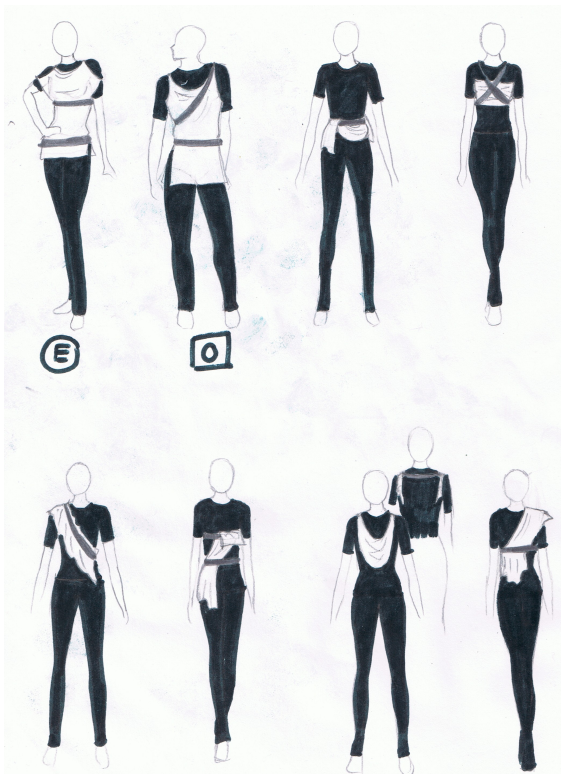
will be moved. Nothing changes. He plays with increasing desperation until his fingers start to falter and the music begins to fail. He chucks his lyre and crumbles. Lights fade.

## **Production Design**

### **Costume Design- Elizabeth Bernstein**

Elizabeth Bernstein is an Archeology major who has participated in digs in Greece. I recruited her because I knew she had knowledge of the world I was exploring. She later shared with me that her father used to read the myth to her when she was a little girl and that it was her favorite one. In our preliminary conversations we thought that standard togas would work for everyone's base costume and as the actors became other characters they could use additional costume pieces to accent that role. Orpheus and Eurydice would have more elaborate costumes so they would be highlighted as the main characters. It quickly became apparent that this was going to be much more work than she would have time to do. I suggested that for movement purposes and to save time and money, the starting point for the costumes should be *blacks*.

In this context, *blacks* refer to the black yoga pants, t-shirts, and socks that HYPE! wears as their costumes. The uniformity and clean slate of being dressed in black from top to bottom allows the ensemble members of HYPE! to play many different characters in their multi-skit shows. Bernstein took off with this idea and sent me the following sketches.



**Figures 1 & 2- Costume Sketches by Elizabeth Bernstein**

Her new idea was to suggest classical Greece with muslin strips and braids, then add smaller pieces for other characters. Orpheus and Eurydice had similar stripped sashes in purples and reds. Bernstein draped them in cream-colored slips and then used the sashes to define the flowing cloth. Eurydice's mother had a blue scarf wrapped around her head and Eurydice's had a lilac sash around her waist, which culminated in a bow that rested on the small of her back. Bernstein spray painted a wreath black and gold for Hades' crown and pulled robes for Hades and Charon. The fates donned red cloth half masks as a bright complement to Hades' deep red wine-colored robe.

**Hair and Make-Up- Kate Naranjo & Lara Vancans**

I struggled with the idea of mimeface, a clown-white mask with black eye markings and lips, for a long time. It was one of the first questions the cast had for me and it was the last one I was able to answer. The mask that traditional mime make-up serves two purposes; it marks one as a performer and it amplifies the exaggerated face acting that often accompanies mime. I waited for the process to gel and for some of the blocking before making a final decision. I realized that clown white would inhibit the face-to-face and hand-to-face moments of contact and I knew I could not let those go. In the end, it was more important to me that the ensemble looked like people as opposed to caricatures so Kate Naranjo and I reached the conclusion of using a standard neutral face (a basic look that accents the lines of one's face so that they are not lost in the stage lights).

Because the tech time was so limited, Naranjo and I decided to keep the hair and make-up flourishes to a minimum. Corinne Segal and Serena Chang, Eurydice's mother and sister, respectively, changed their hair backstage between the wedding/funeral and Eurydice's decent. Hades and Charon got dark green and black circles around their eyes. Naranjo and her last minute assistant, Lara Vancans, aligned the women's hairstyles with the costume design. With the exception of Segal and Chang, all of the ladies had braids of varying types.

### **Music /Sound Design- Brady Pierce**

I knew that from the start I would be more involved in this area of design than all of the others. In fact, I told Brady Pierce when recruiting him that I would be responsible for choosing the songs and that I would only need him to make edits and fill the arena with sound. In HYPE! sometimes music will inspire a piece and other times one has to search for the sound they want. We also talk about music as a supportive backdrop in HYPE! We avoid songs that distract from

the action and aim to compliment the mood of the skit.

I considered instrumental harp music, as it is the lyre's larger cousin, but everything I found had too much air in it. I wanted strings, but I wanted a very earth rooted, complex, and layered sound. I listened to Sting's Songs from the Labyrinth. He collaborated with Bosnian lutenist Edin Karamazov to record the songs of John Dowland, a 16<sup>th</sup>-century English composer. It had the earthbound quality I was looking for, but lacked the layers and the words were distracting. I continued my search with the help of Pandora Internet Radio<sup>®</sup>. I started an instrumental cello station thinking that a larger string instrument would yield the strata I needed. That station eventually led me to Rufus Cappadocia. His music had the depth I was searching for, but the more I listened to it, I realized the force behind it was too great and had the potential to overpower the action. I started a new station using Cappadocia as the source and tailored the station to play similar sounds with less imposing weight. During an accidental afternoon nap, I woke up to "Fix" by James Blackshaw. It is a piano piece that simultaneously sweeps and sinks. The notes grow longer than usual and there is a quiet underlying string section that swells on the heels of the piano. I looked up his name and discovered that he was a twelve-string guitarist as well as a pianist. That was it; I found what I needed. I bought his albums, made a new Pandora station with Blackshaw as the source, and compiled a list of songs and what scenes they suited. I tested the waters by using some of the songs on my list in viewpoints exercises.

I made concrete song assignments to scenes the week of April 10, 2011. This was much later than I had hoped. I let my indecisiveness get the better of me. The two moments of silence came about after adding music to runs of the play. I tried leaving music on during Eurydice's death at the wedding but everything was too casual or too melodramatic. When I pulled the music out of that moment it felt appropriate. The joyous occasion was interrupted so it made

sense for the music to do the same. For the final loss, I had originally wanted the music to echo Orpheus's failure and dissolve. Pierce and I had discussed using "Bled" by James Blackshaw, which uses similar chords in "Echo and Abyss" which plays when Orpheus tries to spark Eurydice's memory in Hades' Palace. I wanted notes to drop out or change pitch to create a failure of connection within the sound. In the end I stopped playing music in rehearsal because the unedited cut was too pretty. Pierce later told me he had over estimated the capabilities of his editing software and that it was choppy as opposed to elegantly disconnected so we cut the track. As long as the music plays, the separation is from reality is established. The power of those two silent moments lies in removing that separation.

### **Lighting Design –Alex Wallch-Hanson**

Alex Wallch-Hanson accomplished a lot more with the repertory plot than I had imagined was possible. We met to discuss colors and agreed that dark cool colors would best define the underworld that I had in mind. Other than that, I let him have full rein on the design. He made a beautiful contrast between the naturalism of the beginning and the abstraction of the underworld. The lights were essential in creating the sensation of a descent and he accomplished that quite elegantly.

## Weekly Rehearsal Reflections

### Condensed Process Calendar

Week Starting	Rehearsal/ Meetings / Significant Events
Jan 23, 2011	Finalizing Action Plot, recruiting cast and crew
Jan 30, 2011	Confirming Ensemble
Feb 6, 2011	Rehearsal Feb 8 <sup>th</sup> : Introduction, discuss structure of process, reveal myth and start mime technique.
Feb 13, 2011	Rehearsal Feb 15 <sup>th</sup> : Viewpoints with Claire Redfield's cast, continue mime technique.
Feb 20, 2011	Rehearsal Feb 22 <sup>nd</sup> : Contact Improvisation, Casting exercise. Feb 23 <sup>rd</sup> : Finalized Casting
Feb 27, 2011	Rehearsal Mar 1 <sup>st</sup> : Mime telephone as review of technique, character conferences
Mar 6, 2011	Rehearsal Mar 8 <sup>th</sup> : Gesture cycle exploration, start opening Rehearsal Mar 10 <sup>th</sup> : Continuation of gesture cycle exploration and opening
Mar 13, 2011	First production staff meeting, Theresa starts coming to rehearsals, New revision of Action Plot Rehearsal Mar 15 <sup>th</sup> : Logistics of lifts, 5 Stages of Grief, Open viewpoints Rehearsal Mar 17 <sup>th</sup> : Blocked Wedding, Conversation about love with Alex and Madeline.
Mar 27, 2011	Start rehearsing in Hangar, Avery leaves cast and Ryan joins Rehearsal Mar 29 <sup>th</sup> : Tree exploration and forest blocking Rehearsal Mar 31 <sup>st</sup> : Charon blocking, Ensemble building, Eurydice's decent blocking. Rehearsal Apr 1 <sup>st</sup> : Alex & Madeline improvise and character exercises
Apr 3, 2011	Meeting with Avery. Rehearsal Apr 3 <sup>rd</sup> : Blocking for Eurydice's descent and Wedding Rehearsal Apr 5 <sup>th</sup> : Blocking for Hades' Palace Rehearsal Apr 7 <sup>th</sup> : Blocking for Hades' Palace, Charon, riverbank, and Courting
Apr 10, 2011	Production Staff Meeting with Meredith Apr 13 <sup>th</sup> , Poster Design finished, Publicity begins Rehearsal Apr 10 <sup>th</sup> : Blocking for Charon & Cerberus, Opening, Eurydice's descent, Final loss Rehearsal Apr 12 <sup>th</sup> : 30 mins character work with Alex and Madeline, transitions, stumble through Rehearsal Apr 14 <sup>th</sup> : run, fixes from run
Apr 17, 2011	Last Pstaff meeting before tech Apr 20 <sup>th</sup> , Move to the Arena, Stage floor problems Rehearsal April 19 <sup>th</sup> : Courting and Final Loss Rehearsal Apr 21 <sup>st</sup> : Spacing stop and start run, Rehearsal Apr 23 <sup>rd</sup> : Costume time, run, fixes run
Apr 24, 2011	Tech April 25 <sup>th</sup> Two Performances April 26 <sup>th</sup>



### **Week of Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> 2011**

I am still waiting to hear back from everyone I invited to work with me. This is much worse than waiting to see if my name is on a cast list or not. I am worried that people are merely being polite when they say they would love to work with me on this project but they need to find out if something else pans out. I wonder if part of it is that I am still struggling with my confidence about this experiment. I need to make a point of remembering to not take a rejection of my offer personally. This project is super important to me and while I recognize that, I have to remember that I am the only one who has any details about what story I am telling. I have also never directed outside of HYPE! I am literally asking people to take a leap of faith, so I cannot be too shocked or hurt when I receive more “no thank yous” than “yeses.”

The Action Plot is proving hard to finish without bodies in the space. The ending in particular is tricky because I cannot decide whether to stick with the myth’s ending of Orpheus’ death at the hands of a group of maenads, or to end it after he turns around too soon. I would love a bacchanal, but I feel like it might come out of left field. I am also coming to terms with the fact that much of this will need to be adapted to what the ensemble brings to the plate.

### **Week of Jan 30<sup>th</sup> 2011**

The first rounds of auditions have happened and I have received some definite **nos**, but I also have a small handful of yeses. I am not surprised but I am a little upset. The anticipation is driving me up a wall. I am just antsy and I want to start soon. I had to push back my first rehearsal because I did not have enough people committed by then. I have sent out more invites and reached out to people that I had assumed were unavailable. Things are looking up. By Sunday night I should have an ensemble of 10-11 and 10 was my minimum. Hopefully I will be

able to start rehearsing next Tuesday.

For the people who have committed, scheduling is complicated. I made a spreadsheet but it is difficult to digest. I am realizing the value of an experienced stage manager. I reached out to Theresa and she sent me a conflict sheet and some helpful suggestions. I eventually found three weekly open blocks of time for the entire ensemble to rehearse. In order to make my life easier, I sent those blocks of time out to people who I was waiting to hear from and told them that if they could not make those times work then they would be unable join the ensemble.

### **Week of Feb 6<sup>th</sup> 2011**

My ensemble was complete as of Sunday February 6<sup>th</sup>. On Tuesday February 8<sup>th</sup>, I experienced a new level of anxiety. In preparation for my first rehearsal, I outlined everything I was going to say. I arrived to the room over two hours early and arranged the furniture to maximize the space. Then I sat and waited. I counted out my copies and put on music. I thought the nerves were going to eat me alive, but I managed to reach a state of calm. I handed out the Conflict Sheets as people arrived. They included a few silly questions that I added, such as “What is your favorite smell?” These became unintentional icebreakers. I had originally included them to remind the cast of my playful side because I knew I would take rehearsals very seriously. That dash of silliness eased the tension in the room. I revealed the myth and outlined the process and how the time commitment would increase over time. We started with a quick energy game and then I led Flow. Flow is a viewpoints exercise I learned from Sheridan Thomas’s acting classes. It requires soft focus, a state of not zeroing in on anyone or anything, but maintaining an awareness of one’s surroundings. The actors walk around in soft focus as the director adds instructions. Some of the directions include stopping and starting, varying tempo, and following

someone. The thing I noticed immediately was that the group shared this dynamic forward momentum. The tendency was to stay in motion. This really got me excited. I had a group of movers! After Flow, we learned the mime technique of clicking. Clicking is the act of making contact with an object. It is an exaggerated motion that allows the audience to register that you are interacting with something. I enlisted Ben Leatham and Serena Chang, two very gifted HYPE! mimes who were in the ensemble, to help me teach technique. Serena is particularly good at braking things down into steps and emphasizing muscle memory. We followed clicking with isolation, which is the practice of fixing immobile objects in space when you interact with them. At the end of the evening I told them how excited rehearsal made me for the rest of the semester.

On Saturday, I met with Claire Redfield to discuss and plan our joint cast viewpoints jam. I am excited to work with her, but I am slightly concerned that my cast has not had enough time to gel on its own to mingle forces with another ensemble. Claire has been rehearsing quite a few more weeks than I have, but we have different schedules and this is the only window that lines up.

### **Week of Feb 13<sup>th</sup> 2011**

The first hour of Tuesday's rehearsal was spent exploring viewpoints with Claire's cast. This was a useful experience, but a little poorly timed on my part. My cast had no time to really bond as an ensemble and delve into the viewpoints whereas Claire's cast had been working together for weeks. I think that she and I got swept up in supporting each other and collaborating but I do not think that either one of us served our processes' individual needs. That said, it was a lot of fun, and I believe the best way to learn viewpoints is to do them, even if you are not fully

sure what is going on. I was very impressed by Ben Jaye, a senior who has not acted since high school. He volunteered for an open viewpoints session without easing into it and he just went with the flow. That bravery and willingness to try was incredible to me. I had originally hoped to cast this week but I was delayed because Kevin McDonald was missing and I had not ruled him out for Orpheus yet.

Instead, we continued mime technique training. We covered, doors, stairs, leaning, and pushing. I realized in rehearsal why I lacked the metaphors and tricks that Ben and Serena had for technique teaching. When I joined HYPE! it was relatively late in the semester so I learned all of my technique as we blocked skits. I mostly taught myself until later in the semester when everyone realized that they had failed to teach that semester's new mimes the majority of technique. All of the know-how is scattered in my brain and muscle memory as opposed to organized with specific metaphors and training exercises. Ben and Serena were a great help in teaching the techniques to people who did not grasp the way I phrased things because they knew the metaphors and training exercises so well.

### **Week of Feb 20<sup>th</sup> 2011**

On Tuesday I met with Kevin 30 minutes earlier than scheduled rehearsal to catch him up on technique that he missed last week. I devoted this week's rehearsal to contact improvisation and a casting exercise. The contact improvisation exercises did increase the frequency of touching in the open viewpoints that followed. They are expanding into abstraction and really tuning into each other's bodies.

My casting exercise consisted of a series of boy- girl pairs. I asked them to walk in the space in soft focus. Then I said I would call out two names and when I did, everyone else should

move to the edges of the room and let those two people enter into an open viewpoints accompanied by music. The final instructions were that the boys were to earn the right to hold their girl's hand, and the girls were to avoid being easily won. I did this with 6 pairs and the 6<sup>th</sup> pair had the magic. Alex Cook and Madeline Hall did their viewpoints exercise to José Gonzalez's "Trouble Down the Line." All of a sudden the room popped with a sensual energy. They had an inexplicable connection that allowed them to simultaneously stop and start moving from across the room without looking at each other. The build up to when they actually touched was so palpable that when they held hands, there was an audible collective exhalation from the rest of the ensemble. That improvisation did two massive things. It revealed my Orpheus and Eurydice and it solidified the name of the piece. It amplified the importance of making contact, but also the path and lengths one is willing to take to make it.

After rehearsal, I sat down to cast the remaining characters and they mostly fell into place. I did have concerns about fairness and people losing interest because they did not get a part they wanted, but after I sent out the cast list, the responses were generally positive.

### **Week of Feb 27<sup>th</sup> 2011**

I was so sick on Tuesday that I should have cancelled rehearsal. I had zero energy so rehearsal had zero energy, and I felt guilty for sucking the energy of the room. As a mime technique refresher, the ensemble played mime telephone. It is "Whisper Down the Lane" except one group waits outside and sends their members in one by one to relay a short skit to each other. After everyone has gone everyone talks through what he or she saw beat by beat, starting with the most recent observer and ending with the originator of the skit. Dead energy mime telephone is painful to watch. It was a good technique refresher; I just wish I had been more alert.

When that was over, I gave people the option of having an impromptu character conference. I had not intended to have character conferences at all because as an actress I feel like I am forcing my self to create a picture that I know will change over the process. Nonetheless I could not handle anything that involved a lot of energy and thought this would be an effective use of time instead of just giving it up for the evening. I spoke with Cantwell (Charon), Ben Leatham (Hades), and Madeline Hall (Eurydice). Cantwell was so excited by his role and that really inspired me. We talked about how in addition to being a character; Charon is an institution in the business of the afterlife. His job is a large part of a soul's journey to its final destination. We discussed shaping his movement and physicality around his duty and his attitude towards his duty.

The first word I used to describe my vision of Hades to Ben was "smug." I did not want a evil caricature of the god, but a grounded and knowledgeable manipulator. Ben said he had been thinking a lot greed and possessiveness, so his reclaiming of Eurydice became a grey area of his attraction to her and his dislike of relinquishing things that he thinks he owns.

I spoke to Madeline last. She had never acted before this and her question was less about the character and more along the lines of "Why me!?" I had a hunch about Madeline when she auditioned for HYPE! in the fall of 2010. She had a stoic grace and elegance about her that was still warm. I told her this and added; "I didn't cast you because you are her, but because you know her. Don't waste too much energy trying to act, follow your instincts. You are not the same person but you carry her, just let her out," and she did just that.

## **Week of Mar 6<sup>th</sup> 2011**

This week we began to rehearse biweekly. Tuesday and Thursday were both dedicated to

the opening. We explored gesture cycles of longing and separation. Using what the actors created, we compiled a menu of gestures for both halves of the opening sequence. We worked on some dark material for the entirety of Tuesday night and I realized that rehearsals should end on a lighter note if possible.

We revisited the opening on Thursday. After finally getting the blocking I envisioned, I realized that the missing element was the magnetism between Alex and Madeline. This prompted me to schedule a lovers' rehearsal as soon as possible.

### **Week of Mar 13<sup>th</sup> 2011**

This week Theresa started coming to rehearsals. Just knowing that I did not have to keep time was a giant help. On Tuesday, Avery did not come to rehearsal but sent word with Emily that she would be late. When I called to ask what was going on I ended up telling her to stay home because we were dealing with heavy themes and she sounded upset. We did a viewpoints exploration of the 5 stages of grief that culminated in an open viewpoint session of Eurydice's descent. I gave unclear directions and when the exercise flopped, it left a strange vibe in the room. I was stressed out because Avery was missing and I was not effectively communicating my vision for the scene. I think people left thinking they had done something wrong when I was really scolding myself. I have to be more aware of how the energy I have as a director reflects in the work.

I rewrote a lot this week. I chose the ending without the Bacchanal. I could not find an appropriate transition and I felt the reality of the time crunch. Tuesday, as murky as the energy was, really clarified what I wanted for Eurydice's Descent. However, we did not rehearse it on Thursday. I put it on the back burner so that when we came back to it, the memory of that tense

rehearsal would not be so close. Instead, I worked with Serena on the snake establishment at the wedding. I told the remainder of the ensemble to create a wedding ritual. The criteria consisted of non-western, community-based, joyous, loving and contact. When I finished with Serena, I gave them five minutes to plug her into what they had and then they had to show me their creation. When I returned and watched, I started to cry. It was everything I asked for but nothing I could have imagined. The creation molded by a community is so much more satisfying to me than what one person dictates. That was the note we ended on before Spring Break, and I could not have been happier.

### **Week of Mar 27<sup>th</sup> 2011**

The return from Spring Break has illuminated how little rehearsal time is left in the process. I realize I need to block twice as fast as I have been. This means there is a little less time for creative collaboration, but I am trying to be more specific about the mechanics as opposed to the motivations. This shift was abrupt one, especially because of the way things ended before spring break. Things are moving along though.

On Wednesday morning I received an e-mail from Avery that said she was considering dropping out of the project. This elicited more feelings than I could name. I could sense that she was withdrawn from the beginning, especially since her main reason for doing it was that her roommate, Emily, was. At first I was just angry but really it was a way to mask how much it hurt. It felt like she was rejecting me. I felt like I had done everything in my power to get her interested in the process and this was a result of my failure to inspire her. Luckily, that Wednesday I had a prescheduled meeting with Sheriden Thomas, my advisor and thesis chairperson, and she shared some insight on the situation that answered some questions. Most



importantly, she helped me accept that it was not my fault. Picking up from there, I started to search for a replacement. I knew from the moment I read the e-mail that I did not want her in the ensemble anymore. The energy of someone who feels coerced to be creating was not something I needed. Ryan Willison, another member of HYPE! joined the cast. The situation that felt like a crater first thing in the morning was resolved by 4PM the same day.

On Thursday, Ryan jumped into the process and did not waste time testing the waters. Because he went straight to work, everyone followed suit. I am so thankful for that professionalism. Oh top of that, Eurydice's Descent was blocked on Thursday and it came out beautifully. I needed a win and I felt like I got two.

Friday evening Alex, Madeline, and I met to have a "lovers' rehearsal." It was mostly about exploring the arc of their relationship. To warm up and relax we played some improvisation games including "Please- No" and "Park Bench." Afterwards, I used a modified Tresspass exercise to develop a deeper connection between them. In Tresspass, two actors sit facing each other and look into each other's left eye. This creates a loop of energy between the two actors. I used that as the starting point. I let Alex and Madeline do this in silence for about five minutes before asking them questions about their characters' relationship. After that I told them to gradually slip into character. I saw them both arrive and share one of the most tender smiles I have seen. I let that simmer for another five minutes before telling them to run to separate corners of the room and face each other. At this point they could ask to take a step forward and I would give them permission or deny it. When they had almost reached each other I made Orpheus turn around. He asked to turn around several times before I said yes and when he turned I sent Eurydice back to her corner on the far side of the room. Then I asked, "What are you thinking?" and he replied "That it was better when she was closer but I couldn't see her." At this

point I said I would look away at which point all rules would become void. I barely turned my head before they rushed to hold each other. I ended the exercise there. Neither Alex nor Madeline wanted to describe the experience, but I noticed that they were very close to each other even though they had stepped out of character. I told them to have as much warmth as they needed before they went home.

### **Week of Apr 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011**

On Monday I met with Avery briefly to discuss what she took away from the process. I did not really get anything from her beyond pleasantries. I wish I knew more, but I did not want to pry, and I did not think she had thought of anything to say in defense of her sudden departure.

This week was all about getting the blocking squared away. I am impressed by how the ensemble's ability to keep trying new things, even as we blow through blocking.

### **Week of Apr 10<sup>th</sup> 2011**

Tuesday night was a transitions rehearsal. It was helpful to put all the scenes in order and go over how they were connected before doing a run. The stumble through flew by. I wanted the blackouts to be as swift as possible to avoid the energy from bottoming out, but that managed to translate into rushing the scenes as well.

Sheriden Thomas and all of the production staff, with the exception of Elizabeth Bernstein, attended Thursday night's run at 7PM. This was a major moment of truth, and the response was much better than I had hoped! This was the first time anyone outside of the cast and the rehearsal staff has seen what we had been working on and I was so happy to hear that almost everything read clearly and that generally the aesthetic was pleasing.

Sheriden planted the seed of suggesting the idea of ritual to get the cast to take their time

during the scenes. She also helped me adjust some staging and pull out moments of Orpheus's musical prowess. On Thursday after the run, I added in the music selections I made. I quickly realized that having the music sorted out earlier would have been so much better for the cementing of the whole piece. I sent all of the cuts out the cast and told them to review them over the longish break we had between the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup>. A combination of holy days disrupted our normal schedule, but the hours would be made up the following week.

The weekend was full of individual designer meetings. Having seen the piece, everyone had a better understanding of what was happening and all of the designs crystallized.

### **Week of Apr 17<sup>th</sup> 2011**

Tuesday night was another lovers' rehearsal. It was my first night in the arena. We adjusted the blocking and tried to reignite the connection we created a few weeks previous to this one. For whatever reasons, their connection had become very casual and I had to get them to expand to the scale of epic love. Part of it was Alex's "cool dude zen-mojo" that I knocked out of him. After much barking and prodding, the passionate explosiveness I was after started to reappear.

Thursday night was a spacing stop and start run, followed by an actual run. The piece transferred to the arena well, but some aspects were still flying by and everyone needed to be twice as large to fill the space with energy. The stage floor was hazardous to my sock-footed cast, as there were many half removed and non-flush staples, nails and screws left over from *Arabian Nights* tech. It was a concern, but the scene shop resolved it before our Saturday rehearsal.

We rehearsed from 12- 5 on Saturday. We started with a run and then took the time make

necessary fixes before starting another run at 4 PM. Alex arrived on Saturday; he brought an epic energy to Orpheus' arc and especially the final moment, and I knew then that the piece was on its way to being finished. We had a show, even if the tech did not come together.

### **Week of Apr 24<sup>th</sup> 2011**

Monday night was an emotional roller coaster. The make-up and costumes fell into place first. Then the lights exceeded my expectations and amplified the descent into the underworld beyond what I had imagined. Finally the sound hit all of the right moments and it was born. It was whole and complete. On top of that, the actors truly dropped into the ritual energy and took their time with the important moments. By the end I was breathless. It suddenly hit me that there was not much left for me to do as a director. My dream had been realized. I gave notes and told everyone how grateful I was to have been working with them, because they had created something so dynamic and breathtaking. I went home and cried for more reasons than I could compute. I just knew that even if the audience response was less than positive, that we created something powerful, and larger than ourselves. The only word that feels appropriate to describe that feeling is "awestruck."

I woke up Tuesday so excited to share this with everyone. I expected more fear to creep in, but I did not miss it when it decided not to show up. I knew that everything was going to be more than fine, so I thanked my cast and crew one last time, and then I let them tell the story.

### **Final Reflection**

The audience reaction was overwhelming. I was floored by the turnout at both performances. I would estimate that both performances had an audience of around 70 people. It

was awesome yet terrifying to feel like I had a hand in eliciting such strong emotions. The talkback had a slow start, as I expected, but it turned into a lively discussion about the process. I had some very interesting conversations with audience members about the connections that they made. One individual said she enjoyed how the removal of chairs from sections 1 and 5 evoked the image of an amphitheatre. I did not do this consciously but I love that connection. People wanted to know more about the music than anything else. This to me highlighted how much more I could have done had I made my concrete decisions earlier. I am glad that the music had the power to guide the audiences' auditory stimulation along the same journey they watched.

During the talkback, Claire Redfield asked how the role of audience was affected by the fact that both the performers and spectators were silent. The answer I have to that now is that it requires the audience to be active spectators. Because the storytelling is purely visual, one has to engage with the piece in order to follow the plot. This kind of watching commands concentration and I think that there this phenomenon creates a stronger connection between the audience and the performers.

Department Chair Professor Downing Cless pointed out to me that two of the most significant moments between Orpheus and Eurydice, their first kiss and Eurydice's death, appeared to shrink down to realism in comparison with the magnitude of the rest of the piece's abstract and exaggerated mimetic style. I think this happened for three reasons. The first one being that I really wanted the characters to be empathetic. I focused on the tenderness and the pain of those moments and that brought them from the epic to the physiological. The second reason had to do with the blocking for Orpheus's reaction changing very late in the process. Alex never got enough time to cook that thoroughly.

Professor Laurence Senelick asked me why I chose to do a series of scenes punctuated by

blackouts as opposed to one continuously lit piece with choreographed transitions. A number of factors contributed to that decision. Mainly, I did not have the time to choreograph such transitions because we finished blocking the scenes relatively late and mime convention would not allow for costume changes in sight of the audience. With more time, I would like to incorporate Sheriden Thomas's suggestion of crossfading the transitions, meaning that the first beats of the next scene overlap the final beats of the previous one.

One audience member said to me that it was as though "the piece was born, not made." I think this goes back to the idea of telling the myth as a ritual. At its very core, the story is about human experience of love and loss. It is a fundamental, sacred, and painful occurrence that people must encounter at some point in their lives. That shared reality is the reason the myth touches everyone audience member's heart. The archetype of a pair of doomed lovers make the story heartbreaking, but all people are eventually permanently separated from someone who means a lot to them, be it a family member, a mentor, or a lover.

I was overjoyed with the final product, but I nonetheless have a growing list of improvements that could have been made. During the wedding, half of the audience missed Serena's business with the snake. I always looked there out of habit, but because the lights did not highlight her part of the stage, many people continued to watch the ceremony. If I had made music decisions earlier, there could have been more moments of blocking lined up with the texture of the music. The moments where that happened on accident had a magnetism that would have supported the mystical abstract sections of the piece. For example, in the second performance, during Hades' palace, the song playing at the beginning of the scene ended just as Hades released Orpheus from his choke as opposed to the abrupt cut that was programmed for every other run. It made the moment reverberate in a new way. With a little more time for make-

up workshops, I would have liked Orpheus and Eurydice to have some sort of analogous eye markings. I would not want anything distracting, but I did want to ornament their faces a little more. Also, Kate and I had discussed silver eye make-up for Hades, but the kind available was not reading very clearly. I really liked the idea of mixed metals all over Hades. He had a gold accented crown, and his robe was a mute bronze. The addition of thick silver eyeliner over the dark sunken look would have been perfect.

In terms of the story itself, I wish I had found a way to include Orpheus's murder by the maenads. I think it would have added a considerable amount of time, but length did not seem to be an issue. Also, I am convinced that an ensemble ending echoing the Opening, Eurydice's Descent, or Hades Palace would have been more poetic and much less abrupt. I would want a moment of Eurydice and Orpheus passing each other and pausing only for a moment before lights fade as they continue to walk. I absolutely love Alex's performance at the end, I just feel as though I tried to create this piece that had lyrical poetic energy and symbolism and then the ending plummets down to reality and gritty pain without any warning.

And on the note of feeling unfinished, I most certainly do not consider my work on this play finished. If you were to ask me whether I believed I had achieved my three criteria for success, I would give myself a two out of three. I think I got my actors to communicate events with their bodies that have no words, and I believe the audience was entertained while given a brain buzz, but I think there is a lot more that can be done with the structure of the story, especially with the ending.

I would need a lot of distance to come back to the piece with fresh eyes, but I really hope to do it again. I think a brand new ensemble would bring out so many different elements of the story. In fact, I am not certain it would still be called *Contact*. Under different circumstances this

could have been titled *Faith, Trust, Fate*, etc. I want this mime play to adapt to the times and immediate energies of whoever is working on it.

At the end of my defense, Professor Grossman asked me if I would recommend doing a senior honors thesis to an underclassman and I said yes without hesitation. I cannot believe I created what I did in this past year. It feels so much larger than my previous scope of the world. This project forced me to grow as an artist and work harder than I imagined was possible. Though I feel like I have a lot more work to do on the piece, I am so glad that it was the last thing I did during my time here at Tufts. I cannot think of a better way to end my process and development here. This is the perfect project to help me transition into the larger world of theatre as I graduate, and I am so thankful for the opportunity.



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While I did not explicitly cite all of these works, they were all instrumental and influential to my creative process.

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## **Music List**

“Unabi” by Christen Lien on Battle Cry Vol. 1 © 2009 Christen Lien

“River of Heaven” by James Blackshaw, Imaginational Anthem Vol. 2 © 2006 Tompkins Square

“The Broken Hourglass” by James Blackshaw, The Garden of Forking Paths © 2007 Important Records

“Cross” by James Blackshaw, The Glass Bead Game © 2009 Young God

“Opus 37” by Dustin O’Halloran, Piano Solos Vol 1 © 2006 Filter US Recordings

“Past Has Not Passed” by James Blackshaw, Litany of Echoes © 2008 Tompkins Square

“Another Rather Lovely Thing” by Nick Cave & Warren Ellis, The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford © 2007 Mute Records Ltd.

“Echo & Abyss” by James Blackshaw, Litany of Echoes © 2008 Tompkins Square

“Bled” by James Blackshaw, The Glass Bead Game ©2009 Young God

## **Appendix 1: Production Poster**

## **Appendix 2: Program**

### **Appendix 3: Production DVD**

## Music Featured

All music belongs to the artists and their record companies. No copyright infringement was intended by this production.

“Unabi” by Christen Lien on Battle Cry Vol. 1 © 2009 Christen Lien

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**contact:**  
A Mimed Imaging of Orpheus and Eurydice

**skelletins**, s. : nom donné à des produits chimiques, spécialement ceux qui servent à désinfecter les eaux.  
**skelletation**, s. : squelettation (action de passer à l'état de squelette).  
**skellet**, s. : squelette.  
**skelletogenus**, adj. : producteur de squelette, de tissu squelettique.  
**skelletology**, s. : squelettologie (traité du squelette).  
**skeleton**, s. : squelette; **appendicular** - : squelette des membres; **axial** - : squelette de la tête et du tronc; **cartilaginous** - : structure cartilagineuse à partir de laquelle, par ossification, se forme le squelette.  
**Skene's glands** : glandes de Skene, glandes para-urétrales (urètre de la femme).  
**skeneoscope**, s. : endoscope pour l'examen des glandes de Skene.  
**skenitis**, s. : skénite (inflammation des glandes de Skene).  
**skia-** : skia-, préfixe indiquant un rapport avec les ombres.  
**skiagram or skiagraph**, s. : radiographie (radiogramme).  
**skiagraphy**, s. : radiographie.  
**skiametry**, s. : rétinoscopie.  
**skiascope**, s. : ophtalmoscope.  
**skiascopy**, s. : rétinoscopie.  
**skiatherapy**, s. : radiothérapie (application thérapeutique des rayons X).  
**skin**, s. : peau; **anserine** - : charnière poulie; **- atrophy** : atrophie de la peau; **- bared** : sclérodermie; **- band disease** : sclérodermie des nouveau-nés; **- bronzed** : bronzée; **- Addison** : maladie d'Addison; **- contusion** : contusion de la peau; **- crocodile** - : ichtyose grave; **- deciduous** - or **- shedding** : épluchage; **- disease** : dermatose; **- elastica** : cutis hyperelastica; **- fish** - : ichtyose; **- glossy** - : glossy-skin (trouble trophique de la peau consistant en un aspect lisse et luisant, avec disparition presque complète des plis de flexion); **- goose** - : peau anserine, chair de poule; **- grafting** : greffe épidermique; **- hospital** : hôpital pour maladies de la peau; **- like** : cuticuleux; **- outer** - : épiderme; **- pig** - : peau pédémateuse; **- planning** : abrasion (derm.); **- test** : cuti-réaction; **- true** - : derme; **- v.** : 1. écorcher, dépouiller; 2. se dépouiller, desquamier; **- to cover** : se cicatriser.  
**skinning**, s. : desquamation.  
**skinny**, adj. : 1. cutané, membraneux; 2. décharné, maigre.  
**Skoda resonance sign or tympany** : bruit skodique, skodisme (son tympanique léger donné par la percussion du sommet d'un poumon sain, dans le cours de la pleurésie avec moyen épanchement).  
**Skodaic resonance** : bruit skodique, skodisme.  
**skoliosis**, s. : cf., scoliose.

**skull**, s. : crâne; **- cap** : calotte crânienne.  
**slake**, v. : 1. étancher, apaiser (la soif); 2. désintégrer par l'eau.  
**slakeless**, adj. : se dit d'une soif inextinguible.  
**slant**, adj. : incliné; **- culture** : culture inclinée.  
**slaughter**, s. : abattage; v. : abattre; **- house** : abattoir.  
**slaver**, s. : bave, salive; v. : baver.  
**sleep**, s. : sommeil; **- begetting** - : **- causing or inducing** : narcotique, somnifère, soporifique; **- epilepsy or paroxysm** : narcolepsie; **- hypnotic, magnetic or mesmeric** : sommeil hypnotique; **- lethargic** : sopor, léthargie; **- chloroform** : chloroforme à base de chloroforme; **- walker** : somnambule; **- walling** : somnambulisme; v. : dormir.  
**- sleep**, s. : sommeil; adj. : dormant, endormi; **- bag** : sac de couchage; **- dropsy** : **- thickness** : 1. maladie du sommeil, cathypnose, **- apnosie**, léthargie d'Afrique, narcotisme des Indes; 2. encéphalite léthargique; **- draught or tablet** : narcotique, somnifère, potion soporifique.  
**sleepiness**, s. : 1. envie de dormir, sommeil, somnolence; 2. apathie, indolence, léthargie.  
**sleepless**, adj. : sans sommeil; **- night** : nuit d'insomnie.  
**sleeplessness**, s. : insomnie.  
**sleepy**, adj. : 1. somnolent; **- to be** - : avoir sommeil; 2. apathique, indolent, léthargique.  
**slender**, adj. : mince, ténu, fusiforme.  
**slide**, s. : lame (pour examen microscopique); préparation histologique; diapositive, cliché de projection; **- callipers** : pied à coulisse; **- contact** : curseur; **- focusing** - : tube de réglage (microscope); **- projector** : projecteur pour diapositives; **- rule or ruler** : règle à calcul.  
**slim**, adj. : svelte, élancé, mince; v. : s'amincir; maigrir.  
**slimming remedy** : médicament obésifuge; **- treatment** : traitement obésifuge, cure d'amalgissement.  
**slimness**, s. : sveltesse, gracilité, taille mince.  
**sling**, s. : écharpe; **- to have one's arm in a** - : porter le bras en écharpe.  
**slit**, s. : fente, fissure; **- lamp of Gullstrand** : lampe à fente (appareil pour examen de l'endothélium de la surface postérieure de la cornée).  
**slough**, s. : 1. escarre; 2. dépouille, mue (serpent, insecte).  
**sloughing**, s. : formation d'une escarre; 2. mue; **- of the hoof** : avalure du sabot (vétér.).  
**Sluder's method** : mode d'amygdalectomie; **- guillotine** : guillotine pour amygdalectomie.  
**sludge**, s. : 1. vase, fange, bourbe, résidu d'égout; 2. agrégat, empilement (hématol.).  
**sludging**, s. : enclassement.

## Director's Note

Perhaps you are wondering what Contact has to do with any of this. I strongly encourage you to ignore this director's note until after you have seen the show. The piece itself is a much better response to your question. That said I understand there is not much else to do while you wait for us to start. Here are my suggestions: Send some text messages. Check your e-mail if you have a fancy e-mail phone. Talk to the person next to you! If you absolutely insist on knowing at this moment, you will find some semblance of an answer below.

In mime, we call the act of touching an object clicking. It is the first thing you learn. It is also the most important; it allows the audience to recognize the architecture of your character's surroundings. Everything a mime makes contact with gives the audience the next piece of the puzzle. The things a mime "touches" are deliberate choices; every point of contact is vital to the story she/he is trying to tell.

Clicking prompted me to start thinking about the significance of tactile contact. At the beginning of this project, hands were incredibly important to me. I asked my cast to observe them whenever they could and to note their remarkable expressiveness and the multitude of ways in which they are used everyday. During the mime technique training stage of this project, it suddenly made sense why I was so obsessed with hands.

Our sense of touch is right on the heels of our sense of sight. Babies put all kinds of things in their mouths so that they can feel them, not so they can taste them. Lips are more sensitive than fingertips. Babies see something interesting and want to gather more information about it. Museums have to remind their patrons not to touch the things they have come to see. Imagine living without a sense of touch, an entirely numb existence. Humans need contact, and physical connection is only a part of that need. To me, the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is about a pair of lovers who in spite of death do everything in their power to reach each other, to make contact again.

So please, if you are still waiting for us to begin, talk to the person next to you or send some electronic communication; Make contact with someone. Make contact often. It is more precious than you realize.

Hilary Asare, April 2011

**Corinne Segal** (*Eurydice's Mother*) is a sophomore majoring in English. She is thrilled to perform for her third role at Tufts and have the ability to appear in this production alongside some of the most talented individuals she has ever worked with. She would like to thank Hilary, the production staff and the ensemble who have helped her truly embrace mimes and the wonderful work they do!

**Emma Shakarshy** (*Fate/Cerberus*) is a junior majoring in English and Women's Studies. This is her fourth appearance on the Balch Arena Stage. Emma most recently played Bertie, the stealthy maid, in the Drama Department's *Hedda Gabler*. She would like to thank her Tufts family, her home family, and her lovely cast for constantly leaving her absolutely speechless.

**Theresa Sullivan** (*Stage Manager*) is a junior English major/Drama minor. You've recently (not) seen her stage managing the Winter 2011 Drama Department production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. She faxes her thanks to Hil, Meredith, and the production staff for their work and fun. Love to MAC, Whitman, and the SMP.

**Alex Wallach Hanson** (*Lighting Designer*) is a freshman and extremely excited to be working on this show! Selected experience includes work as a lighting designer at Tufts University (*Pippin*), a lighting design internship at the Lyric Stage of Boston (*Shipwrecked: An Entertainment!*), a projection designer at Arlington Children's Theater (*The Laramie Project*), a sound designer at Tufts University (*From Up Here*) and a Stage Manager at Arlington High School (*Fiddler on the Roof*, *Of Thee I Sing*, *Our Town*).

**Ryan Willison** (*Gollum*) is a sophomore International Relations major from Newport Beach, California. Previous shows include *Yerma*, *Assassins*, *The Nerd*, *Cinderella*, and *Little Shop of Horrors*. Ryan is also a proud member of HYPE! Mime Troupe, meaning this semester culminated in five mime rehearsals a week. He wouldn't have had it any other way. He would like to thank his wonderful friends, the cast, and Hilary for creating such an imaginative piece that has been a pleasure to rehearse.

**Emily Henry** (*Fate/Cerberus*) is a freshman from New York

planning to major in International Relations. She is very excited to be performing in her first mime show. Her previous drama related experiences have been a mix of working backstage as a technician or stage manager and performing onstage as an actress. Last semester, she was cast in the Freshman Show. Thanks to the cast and crew for welcoming her into the Tufts theater community!

**Ben Jaye** (*Gollum*) is a senior double majoring in Community Health and Political Science. Though he has not done much in the way of theater since high school, he is excited to have the chance to perform again and is grateful to Hilary for giving him the opportunity to do so. Special thanks goes out to Thrillsides 210's, Laura and the Hotcops for all of their support.

**Ben Leatham** (*Hades*) is both excited and sad to be leaving Tufts on such a high note. Ben would like to thank Hype! for the past three wonderful years, Hilary for this fantastic mime opportunity, and 3Ps for teaching him that Vibrant Acting Reaps Benefits.

**Kevin McDonald** (*Fate/Cerberus*) is a Junior double majoring in Archaeology and Drama. This is his fourth show in the Balch, and he's positively thrilled to be doing one without so many words. Thanks go out to Hilary, the amazing cast and crew, Whitman, and of course, the Cheap Sox.

**Cantwell Muckenfuss** (*Charon*) is a senior majoring in English and this is his debut performance on the stage as opposed to somewhere behind it. His sophomore year he directed *Seussical* and was the ASM for *Cabaret*. He is also a member of the Traveling Treasure Trunk - a children's theatre troupe. He would like to thank Hilary for giving him the chance to finally realize his dream of becoming a mime!

**Kate Naranjo** (*Hair and Make Up Designer*) is a senior majoring in Peace & Justice Studies in Psychology. She's so excited to be working on Hilary's Thesis (her very last show and very first mime foray) and has done a variety of 3ps and TTII h&m designing before. Love to the p-staff, congrats to the cast, and thanks to everyone, ever. Fax me!

**Brady Pierce** (*Sound Designer*) is a Senior English and Political Science double-major, with a minor in Drama. He currently serves as the Drama Department Audio Master. This will be his 11th, and (truly) final, sound design as a Tufts student. He has additionally acted in five shows while at Tufts and currently serves on the Executive Board of Torn Ticket II, Tufts' musical theater organization.

## Eurydice

Eurydice went back to hell.  
What was difficult  
was the travel, which,  
on arrival, is forgotten.

Transition  
is difficult.  
And moving between two worlds  
especially so;  
the tension is very great.

A passage  
filled with regret, with longing,  
to which we have, in the world,  
some slight access or memory.

Only for a moment  
when the dark of the underworld  
settled around her again  
(gentle, respectful),  
only for a moment could  
an image of earth's beauty  
reach her again, beauty  
for which she grieved.

But to live with human faithlessness  
is another matter.

Louisa Glück, Vita Nova ©1999



## CAST

Orpheus.....	Alex Cook
Eurydice.....	Madeline Hall
Eurydice's Little Sister.....	Serena Chang
Eurydice's Mother.....	Corinne Segal
Charon (boatman).....	Cantwell Muckenfuss
Gollums.....	Ben Jaye
.....	Ryan Willison
Hades.....	Ben Leatham
3 Furies & Cerberus.....	Emily Henry
.....	Kevin McDonald
.....	Emma Shkarshy

## PRODUCTION STAFF

Director.....	Hilary Asare
Stage Manager.....	Theresa Sullivan
Costume Designer.....	Elly Bernstein
Lighting Designer.....	Alex Wallach Hanson
Sound Designer.....	Brady Pierce
Hair and Make-Up Designer.....	Kate Naranjo

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The Department of Drama and Dance, HYPE! Mime Troupe, Joanne Barnett, Barbara Grossman, Sheriden Thomas, Susan Corso, Andres Steyerthal (surprise producer!), the Thesis Gals, The Madwomen, 70 Bromfield and 1 Ossipee crews, and The Asare Hubbard family.

**Hilary Asare** (*Director*) is a senior Drama major and this is her directing debut. Previous Balch Arena Theatre appearances include, *Assassins, for colored girls who considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf, The Garden Party, The Madwoman of Chaillot*, and *Big Love*. She is also a member of HYPE! Mime troupe. In the fall of 2009, she studied acting at the British American Drama Academy in London, where she was given the opportunity to appear in *The Arsonists*. She would like to thank the Drama Department for this opportunity and all of the work they have allowed her to do over the past 4 years. She also wants to thank her very loving family, awesome friends, remarkable mimez, and boldly daring cast and crew whose hard work and belief in the process gave life to this experiment.

**Elly Bernstein** (*Costume Designer*) is a junior majoring in archaeology and classics. In the past, Elly has costume designed the 3Ps major *subUrbia* and the Directing II One Act *Medeamaterial*. Next semester she will be designing the Drama Department's production of *The Oedipus Cycle*. She would like to thank everyone for everything, but particularly Hilary for thinking of her and Penney Pinette for all her support.

**Serena Chang** (*Eurydice's Little Sister*) is a year out of Tufts, having spent the past four earning her Bachelor's degree and miming with Boston's only collegiate mime troupe. She is learning what it means to follow her dreams, and is honored to mime again in the Balch Arena. Thanks a million—Hil, for the opportunity; cast, for your warmth, openness, strength, and willingness to take risks; HYPE! for you-know-what; my family, for loving me into being; Leo, for more than I can write here.

**Alex Cook** (*Orpheus*) is a senior English major from New York City who is actually kind of looking forward to graduating. Crazy, right? Previous Tufts credits include: *The Tooth of Crime, Self-Evident, The Imaginary Invalid, The Nerd*, and *Uncle Vanya*. Hilary, you are fantastic director. Thank you for everything.

**Madeline Hall** (*Eurydice*) is thrilled to be performing with this incredibly talented (and eerily mute) group in her first semester of much miming! When not traversing the afterlife or miming, she majors in International Relations and dabbles in editing, writing columns, and serving you coffee. She would like to thank her wildly supportive family, beautiful friends, Hype!, wondrous Club 215, and Hilary herself for providing an opportunity that has undoubtedly changed her life in the best way.