

Eurydice successful at Porter Center

by Will Byers
Arts & Life Editor

EURYDICE was a success, and I applaud the cast and technical crew for succeeding in a challengingly minimalist production. It would seem to be a difficult thing to perform within a set that possesses very few objects to engage, but this is the nature of Sarah Ruhl's EURYDICE, and the cast did splendidly.

A postmodern rendition of the classical myth of Orpheus, EURYDICE focuses more on the title character, Eurydice, than her psaltery-toting, savant husband Orpheus. As well, this stripped-down performance had a uniquely "mod" vision, as the only semblance of an instrument carried by the musical genius Orpheus, an adept Adrian Wagner, is the Harp Lager t-shirt on his back.

Caitlin Kennedy starred as Eurydice, and conveyed with real depth the dilemma of a young woman who is yanked away from her new husband, Orpheus, into the Underworld. In a bewildered state, she is tenderly and tragically looked after by her deceased father, played with great poignancy by Charles Yarbrough.

The Underworld of Greek mythology

embodied chthonic beliefs in the afterlife. It is not to be thought of as heaven or hell, but only as where all living things go when they die. Traditionally one is rowed across the River Styx to enter the land of the dead, but Ruhl's play imagines a rain-filled elevator that was a striking set piece in Brevard's performance.

It was the effective use of water as a motif throughout the performance that provided the most cohesive feeling. To mention a couple of additional moments, the play began with Orpheus' earnest marriage proposal by the sea. Later, Eurydice fatefully wanders from her wedding party to drink from the fountain where she meets the "Nasty/Interesting Man," an incarnation of Hades, or Aidoneus, the Lord of the Underworld. Brian Randall played the various shades of this ominous character with relish, and their insidious intentions came across with a jolting intensity.

When toggling between the suffering Orpheus above and the Underworld below, the brilliant use of whale songs conveyed the immense distance and sensation of submerging. Once the transition to the Underworld had occurred, however, I felt there could have been a more significantly...dank... atmosphere to

achieve a fuller effect.

That being said, I was delighted by the imagination of the crew in working with Sarah Ruhl's descriptions. The Three Stones, who were played by Bethany Tebo, Kara Ontiveros, and Christie Bethard, played their Harpy-like part to its fullest, stoically (and amusingly) posing in rock-strewn costumes that illustrated what becomes of an increasingly submissive resident of the Underworld.

The strongest image to stay with me was the String Room created by Eurydice's father, a resident who resisted the mind-numbing river of the dead. In an afterlife devoid of meaning and purpose, Eurydice's father lovingly creates a place for his daughter to rest and cope, and Charles Yarbrough gave the scene due resonance.



This performance of EURYDICE was full of well-realized moments, and every actor shined while delivering lines without error. If you went you will believe me, even if your butt grew sore during the two hour performance. If you didn't attend and think, perhaps, that I lay the praise on a bit thick, I guess you'd better cough up \$2 for the next performance by Brevard College's theater department in order to have some frame of reference beyond what I offer, you lunk!

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