

“J’ai perdu mon Euridice,” ORPHÉE ET EURIDICE, Christoph Willibald Gluck, to a libretto by Pierre-Louis Moline, Act III, 1774. The earlier Italian version, ORFEO ED EURIDICE (1762) has a libretto by Ranieri de’ Calzabigi, and the aria is entitled “Che farò senza Euridice.” While the French Orphée is sung by a tenor, the Italian Orfeo is a “pants-role” sung by a contralto or mezzo, or more recently, by a countertenor.

SYNOPSIS: Orpheus, the best singer in the world (even admired by the gods), is inconsolable after the death of his beloved wife, Euridice. The gods allow him to go down to Hades in search of her, with the one caveat-- that he is not to look at her or he will lose her forever. Unable to resist this harsh restriction, he finally turns to see her and loses her again to death. However, the gods relent and she is returned to him.

ORPHÉE

J’ai perdu mon Euridice,  
Rien n’égale mon malheur;  
Sort cruel, quelle rigueur!  
Rien n’égale mon malheur;  
Je succombe à ma douleur.  
Euridice! Euridice!

Réponds! Quel supplice! Réponds-moi.  
C’est ton époux, ton époux fidèle;  
Entends ma voix qui t’appelle,  
Ma voix qui t’appelle.

I have lost my Eurydice.  
Nothing equals my despair.  
Cruel fate, mis’rable grief!  
Nothing equals my despair.  
I will die from all my pain.  
Euridice! Euridice!

Answer! What torment! Answer me!  
It’s your husband, your faithful husband;  
Hear my voice that implores you. .  
My voice that implores you.

J’ai perdu mon Euridice,  
Rien n’égale mon malheur;  
Sort cruel, quelle rigueur!  
Rien n’égale mon malheur;  
Je succombe à ma douleur.  
Euridice! Euridice!  
Mortel silence, vaine espérance!  
Quelle souffrance!  
Quel torment déchire mon coeur!

I have lost my Euridice,  
Nothing equals my despair.  
Cruel fate, mis’rable grief!  
Nothing equals my despair.  
I will die from all my pain.  
Euridice! Euridice!  
Such deathly silence, no hope awaits me!  
Terrible suff’ring!  
What tormenting breaks my heart!

J’ai perdu mon Euridice,  
Rien n’égale mon malheur!  
Sort cruel! quelle rigueur!  
Rien n’égale mon malheur!  
Sort cruel! quelle rigueur!  
Je succombe à ma douleur!  
À ma douleur, à ma douleur!

I have lost my Euridice,  
Nothing equals my despair.  
Cruel fate, mis’rable grief!  
Nothing equals my despair.  
Cruel fate, mis’rable grief!  
I will die from all my pain.  
from all my pain, from all my pain.

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