

~ PROGRAM ~

The Eastman Collegium Musicum

Paul O'Dette and Christel Thielmann, *directors*

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

Kilbourn Hall

7:30 PM

The Eastman Collegium Musicum
Paul O'Dette & Christel Thielmann, directors

L'Orfeo (1647)

Tragicomedia per Musica

Musica del Signor Luigi Rossi (1597-1653)
Poesia del Signor Francesco Buti

Act 1 (Arcadia)

Act 2

~ INTERMISSION ~

Act 3 (The Underworld)



Eastman School of Music

~ PERSONNEL ~

Cast (in order of appearance)

Augure [The High Priest].....	Alex Nunley
Endimione [Father of Eurydice].....	Owen Connolly
Euridice [Endymion's daughter].....	Abigail Liebegott
Nutrice [Euridice's nurse].....	Kai Harrington
Orfeo [Apollo's son, in love with Eurydice].....	Anna Bjerken
Aristeo [Bacchus's son, in love with Eurydice].....	Liyao Yu
Satiro [Aristeus's companion, the Satyr].....	Elijah Gebers
Le Tre Grazie [The Three Graces of Venus].....	Emily Krasinski
	Nichole Waligóra
	Audrey Rivetta
Amore [Cupid, son of Venus].....	Evan Anderson
Venere [Venus, Goddess of Love].....	Konstantina Gotouhidis
Momo [God of Bad-Mouthing and Insults].....	Evan Sercombe
Apollo [The Sun-God, Father of Orpheus].....	Audrey Rivetta
Himeneo [Hymen, God of Marriage].....	Evan Anderson
Giunone [Juno, Goddess of Requite Love and Consort of Jove]...	Sophia Masullo
Vecchia [Venus disguised as an old woman].....	Lucas Mann
Le Tre Parche [The Three Fates].....	Emily Krasinski
	Nichole Waligóra
	Leah Rosenman
Gelosia [Jealousy].....	Leah Rosenman
Sospetto [Suspicion].....	Remington Collins
Proserpina [wife of Pluto].....	Emily Krasinski
Plutone [King of the Underworld].....	Alex Nunley
Caronte [Ferryman at the River Styx].....	Benjamin Coudriet
Bacchus [God of Wine].....	Kai Harrington
Giove [Jove, King of all the Gods].....	Lucas Mann

~ PERSONNEL ~

Eastman Collegium Vocal Ensemble

Soprano

Evan Anderson
Anna Bjerken
Remington Collins
Konstantina Gotouhidis
Emily Krasinski
Abigail Liebegott
Sophia Masullo
Nichole Waligóra

Alto

Kai Harrington
Audrey Rivetta
Leah Rosenman
Liyao Yu

Tenor

Benjamin Coudriet
Owen Connolly
Lucas Mann
Evan Sercombe

Bass

Elijah Gebers
Jacob Lytle
Alex Nunley

Eastman Collegium Baroque Orchestra

Baroque Violin

Liliana Mahave (leader)
Lydia McConkie
Kellen Mikesell
Victoria Zhao
James Marshall
Ehren Collins
Keegan Matzky

Baroque Viola

Liam DeRosa
Daphne Huerta
Arthur Nyanfor

Baroque Cello

Adela Ramirez
Maggie Slap
Yu-Ping Wu

Baroque Bass

Cyrus Kuester-Ha

Baroque Oboe

Lewis Painter
Samuel Suchta
Nathan Clarke

Baroque Bassoon

Colin Gentry

Theorbo and Baroque Guitar

Pedro Sperb

Harpsichord and Organ

Stan van Rompay

~ SYNOPSIS ~

Act 1

Orpheus, son of Apollo, is betrothed to the beautiful Eurydice. Her father, Endymion, is concerned by the bad omens announced by the High Priest Augure, but Eurydice reassures him “When a heart in love is blessed by fate, nothing else matters.” Eurydice and Orpheus sing a tender love duet and are joined by Endymion and Nutrice (Eurydice’s nurse) in a triumphant quartet “Love conquers all!” Aristeus, son of Bacchus, and a rival to Orpheus for the love of Eurydice, arrives, accompanied by his friend the Satyr. Aristeus laments bitterly about the impending marriage, but is interrupted by the Satyr who asks “How could you be so upset about this? She is, after all, just a woman!” At this point Venus descends in a cloud machine with her son Cupid and the three Graces. Venus, as the enemy of Apollo (Orpheus’ father), agrees to aid Aristeus by disguising herself as an old woman and tricking Eurydice into changing her mind. Aristeus replies that death would be better than to see Eurydice marry Orpheus.

A wedding celebration is prepared and a chorus sings of the happiness of the young couple. They are interrupted by the arrival of the uninvited god of bad-mouthing, Momus, who announces he is there to insult them: “If a woman is ugly, what misery, but if she’s beautiful, what danger!” The wedding ceremony proceeds, but as Apollo is about to join the happy couple, the torches are blown out, causing fears of dire things to come. The lovers are still optimistic and reaffirm their desire. The act ends with the gods and the chorus imploring Heaven for pity: “Without such war, Love would create a paradise on earth.”

Act 2

Venus, disguised as an old woman, pretends to teach Aristeus a song, to avoid arousing the suspicions of the approaching Eurydice and her nurse. The old woman tells the anxious Eurydice that she can only change her fate by changing her spouse. Eurydice’s nurse is also concerned about the bad omens and convinces Eurydice to listen to Aristeus confess his love to her. She responds that his pain moves her but does not affect her steadfast love for Orpheus.

Momo, Juno and Apollo each attack Cupid for the suffering and tyranny of love. Cupid announces that he has already decided to thwart his mother’s plan and will side with Orpheus and Eurydice. The Graces appear with Orpheus and urge him to use the power of his “sweet song” to his advantage. Cupid informs Orpheus of his mother’s plot against him and promises to be his protector. Venus learns of her son’s betrayal and vows to get her revenge.

Eurydice is comforted by her friends, who sing her a lullaby.

Intermission

A group of dancers appears, Eurydice awakens and joins them in a lively dance: “Who will not yield to Love’s power.” While she is dancing Eurydice is bitten by a poisonous snake. Mortally wounded, she sinks to the ground. Aristeus tries to help her but Eurydice rejects him. She calls for Orpheus, but he does not come. As she gasps her last breath, her friends sing a moving lament “Ah, weep! Shed tears you Thracian shores, bereft of all perfection of beauty.” Apollo joins in “Though I am a god, my heart is also carried away by grief.” The act concludes with Eurydice’s body being carried off into the open mouth of Hades.

Act 3

In a desolate place strewn with rocks, Orpheus enters alone to sing of his grief: “Tears, where are you?” The three Fates enter, but are unable to offer any consolation. Their power does not extend to the kingdom of Shades, where Eurydice now languishes at the court of Pluto. They can show Orpheus the way, but warn him of the dangers of Hell. Orpheus ignores their warning: “The fires of Hell cannot compare to the fire that consumes me” The Fates leave and Orpheus prepares for his perilous journey.

Momus and the Satyr enter and are amazed to see Aristeus, now engaged in his madness and even trying to embrace the air. Aristeus imagines himself as the Serpent, Python, as Deucalion, and as a thousand other horrid fantasies. He mistakes the Satyr for Eurydice and Momus for her nurse! They sing a silly trio together, pretending to be a military band, after which Aristeus throws himself off a cliff in despair.

The two rival goddesses, Venus and Juno, enter. Venus proclaims her triumph but Juno counterattacks, blaming her for the death of Eurydice. Both are now resolved to fight for their respective lovers--Juno for Orpheus and Eurydice, and Venus for Aristeus.

The scene shifts to the gates of Hell. Jealousy and Suspicion confront Proserpina, the wife of Pluto. Jealousy reminds Proserpina that Eurydice is now in Hades, and that for her own peace of mind, and to keep her hold on Pluto, Proserpina must do all in her power to persuade the King to release the unhappy lovers. Pluto admonishes the boatsman Charon for allowing the mortal Orpheus into the underworld, but Charon convinces his boss to admit Orpheus into their midst, and to judge for himself the power of the poet’s song and his determination to win back Eurydice and allow her to return to Arcadia. Pluto relents and agrees to see Orpheus. Orpheus appears and sings “Love escorted me and replied to my laments.”

His words and singing deeply move Pluto and, encouraged by the pleas of his wife, Proserpina, he allows Eurydice to accompany Orpheus back to the regions above, upon the condition that Orpheus must not look upon her until he has departed from Hades. Pluto, pleased by his own gesture of mercy, commands his court to celebrate with a magnificent ballet of dancing animals: a bull, snail, lizard, owl, and squid. [Originally, this ballet was extremely elaborate and lengthy, involving as many as fifty dancers dressed as animals. We are offering only a short sample of what might have been heard in 1647.] Charon arrives a short time later to announce that Orpheus has broken his word by glancing back at Eurydice in a moment of anxiety. Pluto commands his monsters to return Eurydice to the underworld and to send Orpheus back to the Thracian fields empty-handed. A group of drunken Bacchantes appear with the god Bacchus: “Long live Bacchus, Our King.” The dance is interrupted by the arrival of Venus, who announces to Bacchus that his son, Aristeus, has gone mad and has leapt from a high precipice to his death. Bacchus orders his followers to seek out the lovers and kill them in revenge.

Orpheus enters and sings of his pain and loss. His grief is so overwhelming that nothing remains for him but to end his life. Jove descends to pronounce a final verdict. Orpheus is to be reinstated in the celestial regions of Heaven. The opera ends with a final chorus, “Only Heaven, which is always stable, can grant them deserved grace.”

Paul O’Dette

UPCOMING COLLEGIUM CONCERTS

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All student performances are free unless otherwise noted.

Eastman Collegium Musicum

Tuesday, March 3, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Kilbourn Hall

Paul O’Dette and Christel Thielmann, directors

Eastman Collegium Musicum

Tuesday, April 28, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Kilbourn Hall

Paul O’Dette and Christel Thielmann, directors

We acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the “Great Hill People” and “Keepers of the Western Door” of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the people whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.



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