

**PERUSAL SCRIPT**

# **The Death of Eurydice**

A One-Act Play

by

**Mahonri Stewart**



Newport, Maine

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## **THE DEATH OF EURYDICE**

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**LBT ORDER #3314**

## CAST

MAN

WOMAN

SET: with multi-media screens about the stage (at director's option) there is a boat.

**THE DEATH OF EURYDICE** by Mahonri Stewart Run Time: 20 mins. Cast Size: 2 (1f, 1m) Setting is suggested to employ multi-media screens but the play can be performed without them, if desired. In this successful and beautiful short play that has been performed in theater festivals in Los Angeles and Switzerland, a woman find herself on a boat with a mysterious stranger. It's not long before she discovers that she's in the Underworld, struggling to find meaning and purpose in her life and death. This is also included as a segment of the full length play *Manifest*. Premiered by the FEATS Theatre Festival in Switzerland, 2011. **ORDER #3314**

**Mahonri Stewart** is an award winning writer and educator. He has written over two dozen plays, most of which have been produced throughout the U.S. and Europe, including productions in Los Angeles, Scotland, and Switzerland. In 2004, his premiere play *Farewell to Eden* won the Kennedy Center's American College Theater Festival's National Playwriting Award (Second Place) and their National Selection Team Fellowship Award. Since then he has also received numerous other awards and honors and continues to expand his writing into various mediums, including screenplays, graphic novels, poetry, and novels. He received his MFA degree in Dramatic Writing from Arizona State University, where he wrote both the stage version of *Jimmy Stewart Goes to Hollywood*, as well as a screenplay version. He received his Bachelors degree in Theatre Arts from Utah Valley University. He's a former Playwright in Residence at the Noorda Regional Theater for Children and Youth.

### REVIEW EXCERPTS:

"[A] shining achievement ... Retellings that bring to light new ideas in ancient stories ... are some of my favorite things in the world, and Stewart pulls this off beautifully! ... Not only was the writing solid and interesting, it was accompanied by standout performances by Rachel Baird (who also directed) and Adam Argyle." —**Bianca Dillard**, *Utah Theatre Bloggers Association*

"Mahonri Stewart's plays never fail to inspire." —**Hillary Stirling**, *A Motley Vision*

"This was an amazing display of Utah Theater at its finest ... I left the theatre with great respect for Mahonri Stewart, a playwright who clearly knows how to tell a story that makes you think long after the curtain closes." —**Rebecca Gunyan**, *Front Row Reviewers*

## The Death of Eurydice

*(The lights dim on the MAN and the WOMAN. On the screens appears what seems to be dark water. The sounds of the water lapping against a boat are also heard. Lights rise again on the WOMAN, as she represents sitting in a boat. Standing behind her is the MAN. The MAN wears a beautiful, Grecian helmet, or perhaps just a simple hat. At first the WOMAN does not notice the MAN and is humming softly to herself. She touches the river as the boat glides. As she interacts with the river, sounds are made to signify how she is touching it, coordinated to match exactly the sound of water to her movement. Two screens [optional] show images and film footage throughout the show, as indicated in the text, as well as additional moments decided by the director. To begin, the screens show water, or a water-like substance.)*

**MAN:** That's a very pretty tune.

*(The WOMAN is startled and looks behind her.)*

**WOMAN:** I didn't know you were there.

*(Beat.)*

It's rather dark down here, isn't it?

**MAN:** No. Your eyes just can't see it yet.

**WOMAN:** I think it's dark.

*(The WOMAN starts humming to herself again.)*

**MAN:** That's a very pretty tune.

**WOMAN:** What?

**MAN:** That's a very pretty tune.

**WOMAN:** My husband composed it. He's talented that way. Some say that he can even make the trees and the rocks dance to his music.

**MAN:** Can he?

**WOMAN:** That's what they say.

**MAN:** I like music.

*(Silence. The WOMAN notices something in the water. She leans over, anxiously curious. The MAN does not react.)*

**WOMAN:** There's something in the water.

**MAN:** What do you remember?

**WOMAN:** About what?

**MAN:** What do you last remember?

**WOMAN:** I—I think I'm supposed to give you this.

*(The WOMAN takes a coin out of her mouth. She tries to hand it to the MAN: The MAN does not move to take it.)*

**MAN:** I don't need it.

**WOMAN:** But it's the price for the ferry . . . .

**MAN:** I don't need it. Throw it onto the river.

**WOMAN:** Into the river?

**MAN:** **Onto** the river.

**WOMAN:** But that's a waste.

**MAN:** Throw it onto the river.

*(The WOMAN is skeptical at first but then throws the coin overboard. The coin does not make the sound of a coin splashing in the water, as it should, but instead makes the sound of metal against metal.)*

**WOMAN:** I—I don't understand. It's not sinking.

**MAN:** Should it sink?

**WOMAN:** Metal always sinks in the water.

**MAN:** You take it for granted that the river is made of water.

*(The WOMAN, even more confused than before, looks back into the water more intently and then back at the coin, touching it. She picks it up, and then throws it overboard again. It makes the same metallic sound.)*

**WOMAN:** Amazing.

**MAN:** *(With a smile.)* Easily pleased.

**WOMAN:** And—and look at this! My hand can go into the water!

*(The WOMAN dips her hand into the water and it comes back wet.)*

If I can go into the water, why can't the coin?

*(The MAN does not answer.)*

You're not very forthcoming, are you?

**MAN:** I want to see you figure it out. It's no fun if I tell you everything.

**WOMAN:** Fun? You think this is fun?

**MAN:** Don't you?

**WOMAN:** I—well, I guess I do.

*(She laughs.)*

Ah, it reminds me of the day when Orpheus . . .

**MAN:** Orpheus?

**WOMAN:** My husband.

**MAN:** Yes. The musician.

*(The screens silently show the scene between her and ORPHEUS as she describes it. At first the scene is somewhat blurry, as if we see it through water, but then it becomes clearer.)*

**WOMAN:** It was raining and I tried to run inside, of course, but he grabbed me by the hand and told me to dance. Dance? Dance, he said! Who dances in the rain?

**MAN:** You did.

**WOMAN:** Yes, we did. We danced like Bacchus drunk with life! We were soaking—Orpheus even caught a small fever for a couple of days, but—well, it's a nice memory.

*(The scene on the screens fades back to water.)*

**MAN:** What do you last remember?

*(The WOMAN pauses. She averts the question.)*

**WOMAN:** Why do you wear that helmet?

**MAN:** It makes me invisible.

**WOMAN:** Uh—okay.

**MAN:** No, really, it does.

**WOMAN:** Well, it's not doing a very good job. I can see you.

**MAN:** Yes. *You* can.

**WOMAN:** I mean who says that? I ask, why do you wear that helmet, and he says, because it makes me invisible! The invisible man! Look, look, everybody, I'm the invisible man! Now you see me, now you don't!

*(She laughs, but then quiets down as she says)*

Here I am and then I'm—gone.

*(The WOMAN looks back the MAN, something really starting to bother her.)*

What did you say your name was?

**MAN:** I didn't.

**WOMAN:** See, this mysterious stranger thing, it's not doing much for me.

*(The MAN doesn't reply.)*

Yep. Having loads of fun.

**MAN:** What do you last remember?

**WOMAN:** I'm not sure I want to remember. The water—does it make you forget?

**MAN:** It doesn't have to. You can push things under or make them rise to the top.

**WOMAN:** Should I forget? Will I be happier that way?

**MAN:** You'll be absolutely care free.

**WOMAN:** But not happy.

**MAN:** There are many different kinds of happy.

**WOMAN:** Just as there are many kinds of sad. And then—they mingle.

*(Making a decision.)*

I will remember.

**MAN:** All right.

*(The screen once again starts to silently show the memory as the WOMAN describes it, at first watery and then clear and precise.)*

**WOMAN:** Orpheus was singing to me, playing his beautiful—

*(The WOMAN starts to choke up)*

—music. Music. Excuse me, I don't know why I'm—excuse me.

**MAN:** I understand.

**WOMAN:** And then he wrapped me in his arms and we slept. I woke up just as the sun was setting and just looked at him for a long time. But as night came I—I heard something. In the woods. It scuffled away and I was nervous for a moment, but then—oh, it was beautiful . . .

**MAN:** . . . music.

*(A beautiful melody is heard on pipes.)*

**WOMAN:** Yes. But how did you know that?

*(The MAN does not respond.)*

They were beautiful pipes. Not as beautiful as Orpheus's music, of course, but—they had a very distinct allure. So I went into the woods, following the music and then—oh.

**MAN:** The satyr.

*(The pipes stop.)*

**WOMAN:** A grotesque little thing. Tried to grope me, get his filthy hands on me, but I ran. He was fast, so I cried out. I heard Orpheus cry out in return. Orpheus was coming; I knew he was coming, but then . . .

**MAN:** The serpent.

**WOMAN:** I didn't see it, you understand. I was so scared that I didn't see it there in front of me in the plain moonlight.

**MAN:** You don't have to say anymore, if you don't want to.

**WOMAN:** No, I think I'd better. Just—just give me a moment.

*(There is a pause as the WOMAN tries to muster all the courage she can to face the truth.)*

I could feel the venom working quickly. I blacked out, but I woke up for a brief moment. I was in my bed and Orpheus was there. Singing. Singing such a sad song and then the venom finished its work and then my heart broke and—and I died.

*(The image on the screens fades away back to the water. For a moment there is only the sound of the river lapping against the boat.)*

**MAN:** Thank you for telling me. Not everyone does. I already know anyway, but it's different, hearing it as you have experienced it. Hear- ing the story as it should be told.

*(Pause.)*

I'm sorry for your loss.

**WOMAN:** So am I.

*(Pause.)*

You're not as I imagined you would be.

**MAN:** Expecting a hooded, skeleton faced man with a scythe?

**WOMAN:** No, actually.

**MAN:** A lot of people expect the hood. I'm a bit of a disappointment, I'm afraid.

**WOMAN:** I imagined you dressed in rich, dark fabrics. In splendor and pomp. I imagined you as arrogant, cold and uncaring.

**MAN:** And now you've decided that I'm not those things.

**WOMAN:** You're a little distant, but you seem kind enough. And you don't have any rings or jewels or silks or anything. Just those clothes and a dorky helmet. You look so—plain.

**MAN:** *(Sincerely.)* Thank you.

**WOMAN:** You're welcome.

**MAN:** After we defeated the Titans, my brothers Zeus, Poseidon, and I, we drew lots to see who got what. Poseidon got the sea, Zeus got the sky and I got this place. I was bitter for a while, but then—well, the place is filled with such light.

**WOMAN:** Light? It's even darker than when I got here.

**MAN:** You'll learn to appreciate it.

**WOMAN:** Thank you, but that's cold comfort right now.

**MAN:** You'll learn to see it.

**WOMAN:** The stories I hear are not very flattering.

**MAN:** We really need to work on our PR.



**WOMAN:** Are they true?

*(The MAN does not reply.)*

The stories? Are they true?

**MAN:** Why would you think they were true? Have you met anyone who has ever come back?

**WOMAN:** No.

**MAN:** Then why should they be true? How would anybody know?

*(The WOMAN considers this.)*

***FOUR more pages to the end of the script.***