

**Extracts of *Orfeu da Conceição*
(translated by David Treece)**

The poems and songs here translated are from the play *Orfeu da Conceição*, by Vinicius de Moraes and Antonio Carlos Jobim. This selection was part of the libretto for “Playing with Orpheus”, performed by the King’s Brazil Ensemble in October 2016, as part of the Festival of Arts and Humanities at King’s College London.

Orpheus

Eurydice... Eurydice... Eurydice ...
The name that bids one to speak
Of love: name of my love, which the wind
Learned so as to pluck the flower’s petals
Name of the nameless star... Eurydice...

Coryphaeus

The perils of this life are too many
For those who feel passion, above all
When a moon suddenly appears
And hangs there in the sky, as if forgotten.
And if the moonlight in its wild frenzy
Is joined by some melody
Then you must watch out
For a woman must be there about.
A woman must be there about, made
Of music, moonlight and feeling
And life won’t let her be, so perfect is she.
A woman who is like the very Moon:
So lovely that she leaves a trail of suffering
So filled with innocence that she stands naked there.

Orpheus

Eurydice... Eurydice... Eurydice...
The name that asks to speak
Of love: name of my love, which the wind

Learned so as to pluck the flower's petals
Name of the nameless star... Eurydice...

A Woman's name

A woman's name
Just a name, no more...
And a self-respecting man
Breaks down and weeps
And acts against his will
And is deprived of peace.
I for instance did not know, oh, oh
What it was to love
Then you appeared to me
And off I followed
And on and on I go...

Modinha with Orpheus's Monologue

Woman beloved above all!
Now you are gone, leave me with my
Heaving, sobbing breast! You stole
Into my life; and every passing hour
Is more reason to love you, time pours
Down its loving oil upon me, my love...
And do you know? Whenever
The pain comes, this longing
To be near, when far, or nearer still
When already near, - what can I say! This agony
That is my frail life, my breast brimming over
The honey in full flow; this inability
To feel I am myself, Orpheus; everything
That is so able to confound a man's
Spirit - none of this matters
When you come and speak sweet nothings
That contentment, that harmony
That body! And you tell me those things
That give me such strength, such courage

Such kingly pride. Oh, my Eurydice
My poetry, my peace, my music!
Don't ever leave me! Without you I am nothing
I am bereft of reason, cast aside, a
Rolling stone. Orpheus minus Eurydice...
How incomprehensible! Existence
Without you is like gazing at a clock
That has only a minute hand. You
Are the hour, you are what gives time
Meaning and direction, my dearest
Friend! Not even mother, father, nothing can compare!
You are life's beauty, beloved
A million times beloved! Oh! Sweet creature! Who
Would think that Orpheus: Orpheus
Whose guitar is the life and soul of the town
And whose voice strips a woman's petals,
Like the breeze the flower - that he, Orpheus
Would surrender like this to your charms!
Mulatto girl, dark skin, white teeth
Go on your way for I shall follow
You in my mind and here close by I stay
When you return, by the full moon,
To the endless embrace of this your friend!
Go about your life, contented little bird
Go about your life for I'll be with you!

If only everyone were just like you

Go about your life
Yours is the way of peace and love
Your life
Is a lovely song of love
Open wide your arms and sing of the last
Remaining hope, the divine hope
Of loving in peace...
If only everyone were just like you
How wonderful life would be!

A song upon the air
A woman in song
A city in song
All smiles, in song, begging
For the beauty of love...

Like the sun, the flower, the light
Loving without lies or suffering
Truth would truly exist
The truth that no one sees
If only everyone were just like you!

Coryphaeus

Man is born of woman and is of
Few days. Along the way
Man dies, he who is born of woman
Who dies so that man may have life.
Life is short-lived, love is short-lived.
Death alone is long lasting...

Woman forever woman

Woman, ah, ah, woman
Forever woman whatever comes about
You embrace me, kiss me, curse me
You put a spell on me
Then you pick a fight
Just to see it all go wrong
Woman, be loyal to me
You're so full of yourself
And sadly there's no room left for me.

Woman, my torment
Our love
Turned out the way it did
And if that's so then don't insist, give it up
Be on your way
Shed a few tears

And forget me.

Orpheus

Go away

My Lady! Go away, I say!

Orpheus is master of the hillside! Orpheus is life

On the hillside no one dies before their time!

Now the hillside is life, the hillside is Orpheus

It is the music of Orpheus! Nothing on the hillside

Exists without Orpheus and his guitar!

Every man and his woman on the hillside

Lives only because Orpheus makes them live

With his music! I am harmony

And peace, and punishment! I am Orpheus

The musician!

Coryphaeus

Orpheus, you have come too late. Your Eurydice

Your Eurydice has died! In that house

In the arms of the man who lost her

In your arms, Orpheus, your Eurydice,

Your Eurydice, Orpheus, has died!

My love and I

My love and I

My love

Who went away

Leaving me so much pain

Such sorrow

In my poor heart

Who swore indeed

She would not leave me

And she went away

Never to return...

La-ra-ra-ra-la

La-ra-ri-la-ra-ra-ra (bis)

Lament on the Hillside

I cannot forget
The look in your eyes
Far away from mine...
Oh, life to me
Means waiting for you
To bid you farewell
Beloved woman!
My destiny!
The early hours are here
Dew has fallen from my eyes...

Coryphaeus

It was like this: my lad was on his way
Darkness was falling
When he entered the woods. All of a sudden
He sees an apparition! He rubs his eyes:
No, it was Orpheus! Orpheus all in white
As he always is, guitar slung at his chest
Arms open wide, a smile on his lips
As if expecting someone, someone who has come
For he suddenly looks round
Opens his arms wide and goes
Running off. My son follows him
But Orpheus has hidden somewhere or other...
Poor fellow. Like a tormented soul...
Worse, maybe, for his is a living torment!

And no one has ever heard a sound again
From his guitar...

Monologue 2

It is early still, my dear. The moon
Is suckling its little stars...
No need to rush. When it is time
Come down from heaven, love, all in white
Like the moon. The world is all milk
Moon milk, and you are the moon, Eurydice...
Tread lightly on the air; climb
Down by a thread of the full moon's light
Come, serene illusion, gentle being
Come, embrace the world with your form
The world that is me, who am nothing
Without Eurydice... Come. Climb gently down
And come forth, show yourself, dispel the illusion, burst
Like a nocturnal flower, my beloved...
Here no one sees us. Those who raise their voices
Do not, cannot see. They are all blind.
I alone am not blind who discover you
In everything and hear you in every sound
I alone am not blind who gather you
From the depths of the night, oh friend of mine
My unceasing friend! how much silence
In your nightly footfall, shedding the petals
From the stars! what a miracle of poetry
In your absence that is only mine! how much music
In this your long awakening in the dark!
Oh! Let me savour all the beauty
Of that moment prior to your coming...
Wait, wait still, for the secret
The secret of everything lies in the instant that
Precedes you when you come. Listen
Beloved... Where can you be that I don't see you
Still? and yet in the depth of the night I feel
The touch of your breasts? Where are you resting

Faithful angel, with your white wings
Fluttering over the treetops? Oh yes, I see you
Now... You are there... Why so sad
My Eurydice? Who has hurt my Eurydice?
No, don't be that way... Why do you not speak?
Answer me, my love! My Eurydice
Bathed in blood?! No!

Eurydice's Waltz

So often have you gone away
That I find myself in despair
I have wept so much, I am so sad
That I can weep no more

Oh, my love, don't leave
Don't leave again
In leaving there is a pain that has no end

There is nothing that can console
The absence of your eyes

Think how longing
more than death itself
Might kill me
Farewell

Coryphaeus

Woman, Death, the Moon conspired
To kill Orpheus, so fatefully
That they killed Orpheus, soul of the streets
Orpheus, the generous, Orpheus, the strong.
Yet there is something those three do not know:
To kill Orpheus Death alone is not enough.
All that is born and has lived must die
The voice of Orpheus alone will never leave this world.