



LOVE AND LOSS: THE STORY OF ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE IN ART AND MUSIC

DR LOIS OLIVER

The Arts Society Fylde
Lowther Pavilion Theatre
3 May 2023 at 2.00pm

*Orpheus with his lute made trees,
And the mountain tops that freeze,
Bow themselves when he did sing . . .*

The story of Orpheus and Eurydice must be one of the best known of the ancient myths - an enduring story, of course, of love and loss. The myths tell us that Orpheus could literally charm the birds out of the trees with his music, yet he failed to bring his beloved Eurydice safely out of the Underworld. All he had to do was to lead her up to the light without looking back. It is hardly a surprise that the tale of a legendary singer who lost his beloved through a single glance has inspired much great music (including the first masterpiece of opera, Monteverdi's *Orfeo*); the visual artists too have responded to this tragic story.

This, then, is the inspiration for today's lecture: Dr Lois Oliver will be our guide in an exploration of the wealth of art and music based on the legend, with a rich array of paintings and musical examples, including Monteverdi and Gluck. Dr Oliver - on her first visit to The Arts Society Fylde - says that the tour will include "Offenbach, even taking in the Can-Can".

LOIS OLIVER

Dr Lois Oliver studied English Literature at Cambridge University, and History of Art at the Courtauld Institute, completing an MA in Venetian Renaissance Art and a PhD thesis entitled *The Image of the Artist, Paris 1815-1855*. She worked at the Harvard Art Museums before joining the curatorial team at the V&A and then the National Gallery, where she curated several exhibitions and contributed to major re-displays of the collections. As Curator at the Royal Academy, Lois has recently curated *Jock MacFadyen: Tourist without a Guidebook* and *Explorations in Paint*. She is co-curator of *Berthe Morisot: Shaping Impressionism* at Dulwich Picture Gallery and the Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris (2023-24). Currently Professor in History of Art at the University of Notre Dame in London, and a Visiting Lecturer at the Courtauld Institute, Lois also writes audio and multimedia tours for clients including the National Gallery, Royal Academy, Royal Collection, and Tate, and has appeared on BBC Radio and TV. Also a keen violinist, Lois plays regularly with the Endellion Festival Orchestra.



MUSIC ACCOMPANYING THE LECTURE

Claudio Monteverdi, *Orfeo*, 1607, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, 1968
Christoph Willibald von Gluck, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, 1762, revised 1774, John Eliot Gardiner, 1991
Jacques Offenbach, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, 1858, Marc Minkowski, 1998
Gian Carlo Menotti, *The Death of Orpheus*, 1990, Richard Hickox, 2001

Image: Orpheus and Eurydice, Edward Poynter, 1862, private collection, public domain
"Orpheus with his lute", Shakespeare, Henry VIII