

# HADESTOWN

## Hermes

### The Myth

Hermes is the messenger and traveling god. He is the personal messenger of Zeus, the king of the gods. He is also the god of trickery and deception. Hermes is the guide of the dead, charged with leading deceased souls into the Underworld. He is known for myths such as leaving his crib as a baby to steal the cattle of the god Apollo and creating the first lyre from the shell of a tortoise. He is often depicted with winged boots, which are a tribute to his well-traveled nature. The only connection between Hermes and Orpheus in classical Greek mythology is that Orpheus was a talented musician who played the lyre, which was Hermes's creation.

vs.

### The Musical

Hermes serves as the narrator of the story and Orpheus's guide/foster-father figure. He encourages Orpheus to pursue Eurydice and is the one to tell him when Eurydice ends up in the Underworld. He also relays messages and warnings from Hades to Orpheus and Eurydice. His costume is equipped with wings on the arms of his suit as an homage to his winged boots from mythology. André de Shields, the Original Broadway Cast Hermes, won the 2019 Tony Award for Best Actor in a Featured Role in a Musical as well as the 2020 Grammy Award for Best Musical Theater Album for his portrayal of Hades.

## Orpheus & Eurydice

### The Myth

Orpheus is a talented lyre musician and is a son of the god of music and poetry, Apollo. He fell in love with Eurydice, a nymph, who did not speak and communicated only through dance. On the day of their wedding, Eurydice was bitten by a viper and dies. Orpheus traveled to the Underworld and sang to Hades, who made a deal with him: he could lead Eurydice from the Underworld on the condition that she not look back to make sure she was following. When Orpheus reached the light, he turned around to hug his bride, but Eurydice was still in the dark and Orpheus's glance backward condemned her to permanent death.

vs.

### The Musical

Orpheus is a poor musician who is working as a waiter when he meets Eurydice, an impoverished girl who seeks safety from famine and cold. Orpheus falls deeply in love with her the moment he sees her and asks her to go home with him. They fall in love and face the changing seasons together. Orpheus, determined to fix the seasons with his song, fails to hear Eurydice's calls for support as a winter storm arrives, and Eurydice is convinced by Hades to join the Underworld in exchange for work. When Orpheus realizes what has happened, he travels to the Underworld to rescue her. He sings to Hades, who relents and makes the deal that he can take her back, but if he turns to look if she is following, she will be taken back to the Underworld forever. In the Original Broadway Cast, Orpheus and Eurydice were played by Reeve Carney and Eva Noblezada, respectively.

## Hades & Persephone

### The Myth

Persephone, the goddess of vegetation and grain, was picking flowers when Hades saw her beauty and wanted her as his wife. He abducted her into the Underworld to live with him. When Demeter, the harvest goddess and Persephone's mother, discovered her daughter was missing, she was devastated and cast famine upon the earth, swearing not to end it until her daughter's return. Zeus, king of the gods, arranged a deal where Persephone lives in the Underworld with Hades for half of the year, and the other half she lives above. Her months in the Underworld symbolize fall and winter, and her months in the upper world represent spring and summer.

vs.

### The Musical

Hades is ruler of the Underworld, where he works dead souls on a wall to keep the enemy — poverty — out. Persephone stays in the Underworld for half the year and brings warmth and joy when she arrives to the upper world, although lately she has been forced by Hades to bring spring late and end summer early. Hades is portrayed as a jealous husband and unsympathetic ruler. Persephone is portrayed as a rebellious spirit ready to push back against her husband's rule. Throughout the story, Persephone's admiration for Orpheus and Eurydice's love leads her to challenge Hades and reform their relationship. In the Original Broadway Cast, Hades and Persephone were played by Patrick Page and Amber Gray, respectively.



## The Creation

Anais Mitchell comes up with the concept for "Wait for Me" while writing her second album. Originally a song to her then-boyfriend, she immediately connected it to the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice.



2004

Mitchell takes the cycle of songs she has developed over the past two years and the original version of "Hadestown" debuts in Barre, Vermont.



2006

Mitchell releases "Hadestown" as a concept album, featuring Justin Vernon of Bon Iver as Orpheus and herself as Eurydice. She tours with a rotating cast.



2010

Mitchell meets with director Rachel Chavkin to revamp the album and add new songs.



2012

The revamped version of "Hadestown" premieres off-Broadway at the New York Theatre Workshop.



2016

"Hadestown" premieres on Broadway. At the 2019 Tony Awards, the show is nominated for 14 different awards and wins eight, including Best Musical.



2019

The "Hadestown" National Tour begins after being delayed for a year due to COVID-19.



2021