FILMS DE FRANCE PRESENT

ORPHEUS

written and directed by

Jean Cocteau
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CAST

Orpheus ... Jean Marais
Heurtebise ... François Périer
The Princess ... Maria Casarès
Eurydice ... Maria Dèa
A Man ... Henri Cremieux
1st Judge ... Jacques Varennes
The Inspector ... Pierre Bertin
Aglaonice ... Greco
The Writer ... Roger Blin
Cégeste ... Edouard Dermithé
The Voice ... Jean Cocteau

CREDITS

Director of Photography ... Nicolas Hayer
Settings ... D'Eaubonne
Costumes ... Escoffier
Music ... Georges Auric
Director of Production ... Emile Darbon
English Version ... Ingram Fraser

An André Paulvé—Films du Palais-Royal Production

THE FILM IS DEDICATED TO CHRISTIAN BERARD
Jean Marais as ORPHEUS.

The Princess (Maria Casarès) and Orpheus (Jean Marais) swear that their love is "forever".

The Messengers of Death from the underworld who aid, and finally arrest, the Princess.

Heurtebise (François Périer) tries to persuade Orpheus (Jean Marais) not to neglect Eurydice.

Orpheus (Jean Marais) and Heurtebise (François Périer) in no-man's-land.

Heurtebise (François Périer) appears before the Tribunal, accused of being an accessory to the death of Eurydice.
The Poets’ Café is the meeting place of literary youth, poets, artists and intellectual snobs. Some admire, and some are jealous of, Orpheus.

Orpheus is the “Poet Laureate”. In the Café his attention is drawn to a very elegant young woman, the Princess. A brawl breaks out around Cégeste, a drunken young poet, whom the Princess tries to drag away from the scuffle. A Police emergency squad arrives, the scuffle increases and, attempting to get away, Cégeste is knocked down by two motor-cycles ridden by men in uniform who suddenly appear and disappear.

The Princess beckons to Orpheus. She tells him to get into her car as she needs him as a witness. Once in the car, Orpheus perceives that the young man is dead and that the car has left the city. On a country road the car is joined by the two motor-cyclists who lead it to a villa on the top of a hill. Orpheus follows the Princess and watches her bring Cégeste back to life and disappear with him through a mirror. Orpheus tries to follow but the mirror is a mirror, and he falls down in a faint.

When he comes to himself, he is alone on the hill from which the villa has disappeared. Heurtebise, the chauffeur to the Princess (who is none other than Death) is asleep in the car. He drives Orpheus to his home, where his wife Eurydice is frantic because of his absence. A rumour is going around that Orpheus is responsible for the disappearance of Cégeste, who has not been seen since the incident in the café.

Orpheus lives only with his thoughts of the strange events he has seen, and of the Princess. He neglects Eurydice to listen to mysterious code messages which come over the radio in the Princess’s car, and of which he seeks the secret.

Ordered to appear before the Police Inspector to answer accusations made against him, Orpheus sees the Princess in the city but can never catch up with her. He does not know that every night the Princess comes through the mirror in his room to watch him sleep.

Eurydice is expecting a child. Miserably unhappy that Orpheus appears to have abandoned her, she decides to seek comfort from her friends of earlier days, the Bacchantes, who hate Orpheus.

On the road, Eurydice is knocked down by the motor-cyclists of Death and taken into the mysterious beyond.

Told by Heurtebise of what has happened, Orpheus abandons listening to the radio messages, which in reality come from Cégeste, to follow Heurtebise into the Kingdom of Death. This time Orpheus himself passes through the mirror. Heurtebise leads Orpheus through a strange no-man’s-land. They finally reach a chamber where a Supreme Tribunal sits in judgement on Death for having acted without orders. Here all secrets became known: that the Princess
loves Orpheus and that Heurtebise unconsciously loves Eurydice. Orpheus is allowed to take back his wife on condition that he never looks at her. Heurtebise accompanies them into the world to help them fulfil this condition of which they will soon clearly grasp all the difficulties. Feeling that she will never again have the love of Orpheus, Eurydice tries to die a second time by forcing her husband to look at her. Finally she succeeds and disappears into limbo.

Almost at the same time the poets of the city, and the Bacchantes, descend upon the house of Orpheus and accuse him of being responsible for the disappearance of Cégeste. Heurtebise comes to the assistance of Orpheus, but a sudden shot kills the poet. The motor-cyclists of Death help Heurtebise to put Orpheus in the Princess's car, under the very eyes of the real police who have come to protect Orpheus.

Death and Cégeste are waiting in no-man's-land. The Princess knows that in that place love cannot exist. She decides to sacrifice her own love to the love of the living. She orders her aides, Heurtebise and Cégeste, to bring Orpheus back to life so that he can rejoin Eurydice. The Princess is arrested by the motor-cyclists of Death, and her fate is unknown.

The Princess (Maria Casarès) appears in the streets of the City where Orpheus is seeking her.

Orpheus fails in his first attempt to reach no-man's-land and collapses in a faint.