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Points of Research:

Alex S - Musical Influences in Hadestown

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Links to check out:

<https://www.playbill.com/article/inside-anais-mitchells-hadestown-script-for-broadway> (some annotations by Anais Mitchell)



HADESTOWN BY ANAIS MITCHELL

DRAMATURGY PACKET BY CAROLINE BUSH, ALEX HAMILTON, KENJIRO
LEE, AND ALEX SHELBOURNE (NTI-AP '20)

SONG LIST

Hadestown is set in a Great Depression-era inspired post-apocalyptic setting, while taking major visual and auditory cues from New Orleans jazz halls. The apocalypse is implied to be a result of climate change caused by Persephone and Hades' failing marriage: there are no springs nor falls, just long winters and all-too-brief summers. One need not try to think of a specific setting, however: as Hermes explains in the opening, "Don't ask where brotha, don't ask when."

The titular "Hadestown" is essentially a factory town run by Hades, which serves to replace the Underworld of the original myth – it is technically Hell, although Mitchell draws a line between Hell and Hadestown a few times in the lyrics.

Act 1

Road to Hell - Hermes enters and introduces the cast, characters, and band of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice.

Any Way the Wind Blows - The Three Fates observe as Eurydice wanders the dying land looking for shelter. Eurydice muses on the state of the world.

Come Home With Me - Orpheus meets Eurydice and immediately falls in love. He speaks to her with Hermes' encouragement. Eurydice is unconvinced that he can provide for her, but Hermes tells her Orpheus will make her feel alive.

Wedding Song - Orpheus and Eurydice discuss what their relationship would be like given the fact they both live in poverty. Orpheus reveals he is writing a song that will bring the world back to its original state, and they will no longer have to struggle.

Epic I - Hermes and Orpheus discuss the melody of Orpheus's song. Hermes reveals it is related to the love of Hades and Persephone and how their love began long ago. Hermes sings a bit of that song, telling the story of how they fell in love, but Persephone was unable to stay with him year round or else all the flowers on the Earth would die, so she has to spend half the year in the sun, and half the year with him, which is how we get seasons.

Livin' It Up On Top - Right on cue, Persephone arrives to herald the start of spring, although Hermes notes she is late to the point that it is practically summer. Persephone, Hermes, Orpheus, Eurydice, and the Chorus celebrate the summer. Orpheus blesses the celebration.

All I've Ever Known (intro) - Hermes muses on how, despite their differences, Orpheus and Eurydice fell in love.

All I've Ever Known - Eurydice and Orpheus sing about their love and how life will always be like this.

Way Down Hadestown - Hades arrives early, much to Persephone's chagrin, to take her home for the winter. Hermes, the Fates, and the Chorus sing about what lies in Hadestown, singing about all the horrible things that go on down there. Eurydice's interest is piqued as she watches Hades and Persephone depart.

Wind Theme/A Gathering Storm - The winter months immediately begin with Persephone gone. Orpheus throws himself into working on his song, while Eurydice tries to gather supplies to survive an oncoming storm.

Epic II - Orpheus works on his song that will change the world, this time singing about Hades' jealousy of Persephone, and introduces the concept of a massive wall that Hades is building to surround Hadestown.

Chant - Hades and Persephone arrive in Hadestown and watch a chorus of workers working in the hot, sweltering conditions of Hades' factory. Persephone is put off by this display, while Hades insists he's done it all for her – he eventually resolves to look for someone who will appreciate his efforts to provide. Up on the surface, Orpheus gets lost in his thoughts as he tries to write his song, unaware of Eurydice's struggles as she starves and eventually gets caught in the storm while looking for supplies.

Hey Little Songbird - Hades returns to the surface world, fed up with Persephone. He encounters and seduces Eurydice into joining him in Hadestown, offering her comfort and survival.

When the Chips Are Down (Intro) - The offer on the table, Hades gives Eurydice a ticket to board the train to Hadestown.

When The Chips Are Down - The three Fates mockingly sing about how people are going to be selfish when their luck is out.

Gone, I'm Gone - Eurydice resolves that she's going to Hadestown despite her love for Orpheus, and she leaves, as the Fates remark to the audience that they would do the same if they were her.

Wait For Me (Intro) - Orpheus returns from a long day of songwriting only to learn from Hermes that Eurydice has gone to Hadestown. Hermes chides Orpheus for letting himself get distracted, but offers the suggestion that Orpheus go after her through an alternate way to Hadestown. Orpheus immediately agrees.

Wait For Me - As Hermes describes the path, Orpheus takes the long journey to Hadestown on foot, calling out for Eurydice that he is coming for her. The Fates question who he thinks he is to do this sort of thing.

Why We Build The Wall - Down in Hadestown once again, Hades gives a speech about his massive wall that the workers are building. Eurydice and the Workers join in, indoctrinated into Hades' philosophy, as Persephone observes.

Why We Build The Wall (Outro) - Hades brings Eurydice into his office to sign some papers. Hermes observes that a lot can happen behind closed doors. Persephone asks the audience if they want a drink, signalling the intermission.

Act 2

Our Lady of the Underground - Persephone and Hermes return with the Workers. Persephone sings about how she's getting restless in Hadestown while reintroducing herself to the audience and the cast. She also introduces the band before escorting the audience back into the story.

Way Down Hadestown (Reprise) - Eurydice is put to work in Hadestown, where she quickly learns that the "freedom" she has gained from moving here comes at the cost of individuality, and she is fated to simply work in the factory for eternity. Eventually she will forget her memories of her past, and even who she is. Hermes explains Eurydice is now essentially dead and trapped in the underworld as another soul.

Flowers - Eurydice mourns the loss of her individuality and the loss of her love, and hopes he will find her again.

Come Home With Me (Reprise) - Orpheus arrives in Hadestown and he and Eurydice reunite. He wants to bring her back, but Hades soon arrives.

Papers (Intro) - Hades furiously explains to Orpheus that Eurydice cannot go home, despite Persephone's attempts to intervene. Orpheus tries to stand up to Hades, but Hades sets the workers on him.

Papers (Instrumental) - The Workers beat the crap out of Orpheus.

Nothing Changes - The Fates chide Orpheus for going through all this trouble when nothing is going to change.

If It's True - Orpheus, initially downbeat, resolves to continue to stand against Hades and fight the injustice he sees in Hadestown, and stand up for the workers as well. The Workers, hearing him, join him.

How Long? - Persephone and Hades argue about the events of the day, with Persephone insisting that Hades let Orpheus take Eurydice home, while Hades remains too proud to consider it. They discuss their frayed relationship.

Chant (Reprise) - Orpheus, Eurydice, and the Workers confront Hades. Hades tells Orpheus he is putting too much energy into trying to save Eurydice, comparing their relationship with his and Persephone's. Orpheus refuses to stand down, so Hades offers Orpheus a chance to prove his worth: he can sing a song, and if it makes Hades feel young again he will let Orpheus take Eurydice home.

Epic III - Orpheus sings the song, which Hades and Persephone recognize as the song about their love, and their love is rekindled by Orpheus's singing about what has become of their love.

Epic III (Outro) - Persephone and Hades dance.

Promises - Eurydice excitedly tells Orpheus they've succeeded and they pledge their love to each other once more.

Word to the Wise - Hades is hesitant to follow through. As the Fates point out, he is now in a bind: if he refuses to let the two go then he's a heartless man and will have made them martyrs; but if he lets them go he's a spineless king and will lose his hold over the workers. The Fates note to him that men have a habit of bringing about their own demise when fate is placed in their hands.

His Kiss, The Riot - Hades muses to Hermes about the bind he finds himself in, and offers the condition for Orpheus and Eurydice: Orpheus has to lead the way and he cannot turn to look at her until they reach the surface.

Wait For Me (Reprise) [Intro] – Hermes shares Hades' conditions with Orpheus and Eurydice. Orpheus thinks it's a trap, but Hermes insists that he needs to think of it as a test.

Wait For Me (Reprise) - Orpheus and Eurydice begin their journey back to the surface as the Workers try to cheer them on. Persephone and Hades question if they will succeed. Hades tells Persephone that it's springtime, therefore it is time for them to separate, but they reaffirm their love for each other.

Doubt Comes In - On the long road away from Hadestown, Orpheus soon finds himself filled with doubt that Eurydice is behind him, questioning his own actions. Eurydice tries to offer him reassurance that she's here. But right as they reach the surface, Orpheus loses his patience and turns around—only to learn Eurydice was right behind him the whole time. A crushed Eurydice is dragged against her will back into the Underworld.

Road to Hell (Reprise) – A saddened Hermes muses on how the story was always going to end this way—this is an old tale, after all, but we tell it again with the hopes that it will somehow end differently. Spring comes back to the surface world. The cast soon reenters, as the story is set up to start once again, and Orpheus and Eurydice meet once more.

We Raise Our Cups (Encore) – After the curtain call, Persephone and Eurydice raise a toast to Orpheus, wherever he is now.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

The characters of *Hadestown* are all adapted from figures in Greek mythology. For further information about their specific inspirations, please see the section “Greek Myths.”



Orpheus

Son of a muse, he sings and plays the lyre. His skills are blessed by the gods themselves as he struggles to work on a song that will restore the world.

Eurydice

More experienced in life, she encounters Orpheus one day and they fall in love. However she is weary of the world and longs for freedom from suffering.



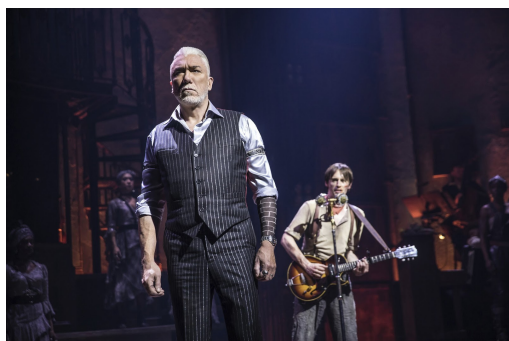
Hermes

Orpheus’s surrogate father, and the messenger god. He serves as the narrator of *Hadestown*, and is honest and smooth-spoken to a fault. He claims to not do things “because he is kind” but he does care for Orpheus and roots for him and Eurydice.

Some insight from David Neuman: “Hermes is the communicator, the narrator/storyteller. Kind of like the ‘ward’ to Orpheus. The role is an older brother when it’s a younger actor (i.e. not Andre De shields) playing Hermes. High status but he also works for Hades, and he’s also very close to Persephone. Also the interlocutor between the play and the audience. He enters in silence so we all feel ourselves in the same room.”

Persephone

Persephone is the Goddess of the Underworld, and also the goddess of spring. For a short time in the year, she is able to go up on the surface, but the rest of it she spends with Hades in Hadestown. She is free spirited and fun loving, and also an alcoholic. She loves Hades but their relationship is on the rocks. Her arrival on the surface brings spring, summer, and good times.



Hades

The God of the Underworld, and the king of Hadestown. He is in some ways the primary antagonist. Cold and uncaring, in part due to his now-distant relationship with Persephone. He believes in totalitarian control.

The Fates

Three spirits who serve as the driving force of many key decisions the characters make over the course of the show, influencing and manipulating their thoughts. In the libretto they are referred to by name as Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos.



The Workers' Chorus

The ensemble, who largely fill the role of workers in Hadestown. Years of living under Hades' rule have turned them into mindless followers of his totalitarian law, and it is Orpheus' intervention that causes them to start fighting for their freedom. (That's NTI alum Kimberly Marable on the left, by the way.)



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Anais Mitchell

By Caroline Bush



Anais Mitchell (March 26, 1981-present) is an American singer-songwriter, musician, and playwright. She has written seven albums, including *Young Man in America*, *Xoa*, *Hadestown*, and *Child Ballads*. She is the composer, lyricist, and libretto writer for the musical *Hadestown*, which began as a folk opera in 2006, became a concept album in 2010, and eventually opened on Broadway in 2019. For her work on *Hadestown* she won the 2019 Tony Award for Best Original Score and was nominated for Best Book of a Musical. In the original 2006 production and on the album she played the role of Eurydice. She is a member of the folk supergroup Bonny Light Horseman.

Rachel Chavkin and the TEAM

By Kenjiro Lee



Rachel Chavkin (July 20, 1980-present) is an American stage director, best known for directing the Broadway musicals *Natasha*, *Pierre*, and *the Great Comet of 1812* and *Hadestown*, receiving Tony Award nominations for both and winning for *Hadestown*. She is a frequent collaborator of *Great Comet* writer Dave Malloy, having worked with him on productions such as *Three Pianos*, *Preludes*, and *Moby-Dick*. She is currently developing the musical *Lempicka*, which premiered in 2018 at the Williamstown Theater Festival and is eyeing a Broadway run.

Her style of directing has been described as having a “multisensory sensibility” by Diep Tran, noting her emphasis on using design to help tell the story. The way she once described it to me (Kenjiro) at a Q&A: **“The reason I’m a good director is because I’m a fucking good dramaturg.”**

The TEAM is Chavkin’s theater company, which she co-founded in 2004 with a group of 6 NYU Alumni and has since grown into a large group of collaborators. The TEAM focuses on devised works about the experience of living in America today. They have toured 12 original works, which have been performed across the country and the world at locations like the National Theatre in London, the Salzburg Festival, and the Hong Kong Arts Festival. Chavkin serves as the Artistic Director of the TEAM and has directed many of their productions. Their work includes Heather Christian’s *Mission Drift*, *Reconstruction (Still Working but the Devil Might Be Inside)* (collaborators on this production include Jeremy O. Harris), *Anything That Gives Off Light*, and currently the *Live From Mount Olympus Podcast* in which Andre De Shields and Amber Gray reprise their roles as Hermes and Persephone.

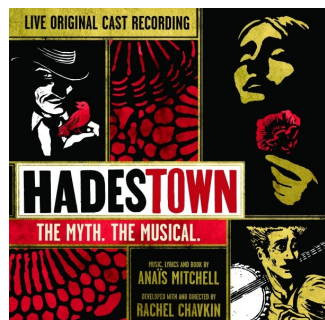
PRODUCTION HISTORY

Although *Hadestown* the production as we know it first opened in New York Off-Broadway in 2016, the musical itself had been in development for around a decade by that point.

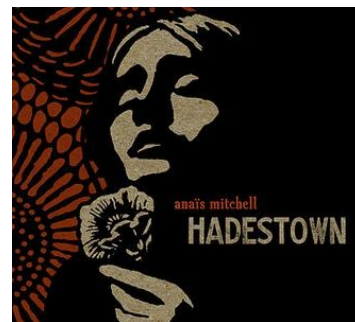
- 2006: An incredibly rough version of the show is staged in Barre and Vergennes by Mitchell. Directed by Ben T. Matchstick and featuring artists drawn from the Vermont area. Mitchell herself stars as Eurydice.
- 2007: This production goes on a seven-day, ten-city tour of Vermont and Massachusetts.
- 2010: Mitchell releases a concept album of the musical featuring much more of the songs. Mitchell as Eurydice is joined by Justin Vernon of Bon Iver as Orpheus, Ani DiFranco as Persephone, Greg Brown as Hades, Ben Knox Miller as Hermes and the Haden Triplets as the Fates. The album was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Recording Package.
- 2010-2012: Mitchell tours a concert version of *Hadestown* across the country with “the Hadestown Orchestra,” recruiting local artists at each stop to perform the various parts.
- 2012: In search of a director, Mitchell meets Rachel Chavkin at *The Great Comet* and they become collaborators, workshopping the show over the next few years.
- 2016: *Hadestown* premieres Off-Broadway at New York Theatre Workshop for a limited run, which is extended due to popular demand. Starring Damon Daunno as Orpheus, Nabiyah Be as Eurydice, Amber Gray as Persephone, Patrick Page as Hades, Chris Sullivan as Hermes, and Lulu Fall, Jessie Shelton, and Shaina Taub as the Fates. This production is staged in the round to capture the Greek amphitheater setting.
- 2017: A planned pre-Broadway run is staged at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton, Canada. Chavkin directs and Amber Gray and Patrick Page reprise their roles. Reeve Carney joins the production as Orpheus, with T.V. Carpio as Eurydice and Kingsley Leggs as Hermes. This production introduces the Workers’ Chorus as the ensemble (the role of which were previously filled by Hermes and the Fates). This production is the first iteration of the musical staged in a proscenium: although it quickly turns out the creative vision needs adjustment to truly fit in this theatrical setting.
- 2018-2019: *Hadestown* makes its UK debut in the Olivier Theatre at the National Theatre in London. Chavkin directs, joined by the production team that will eventually move to Broadway. Page, Gray, and Carney reprise their roles, joined by Eva Noblezada as Eurydice and Andre De Shields as Hermes. Set utilizes more of a thrust setup, but most design elements are finalized here – including the Olivier’s famed drum revolve.
- 2019: *Hadestown* opens on Broadway at the Walter Kerr Theatre. Page, Gray, Carney, Noblezada and Shields reprise their roles from London, joined by Jewelle Blackman, Yvette Gonzales-Nacer, and Kay Trinidad as the Fates.

RECORDINGS

A concept album of *Hadestown*, featuring 20 songs, was released in 2010 by Righteous Babe Records.



A live cast recording of the Off-Broadway production was released in 2017. For legal reasons, it does not contain every song from the production but notably includes lyrics that will change over the course of the musical's development.



The full Original Broadway Cast Recording was released in 2019 after a really annoying “drop” system of song releases that ticked off pretty much every *Hadestown* fan. It features the complete, 40-track score of *Hadestown*.

All of these can be found on your favorite music services.



GREEK MYTHS

By Alex Hamilton

The Tragedy of Orpheus and Eurydice:

Orpheus is known as a musician in the classical sense, a wandering bard, with the most beautiful voice that was blessed by the muses. He was in love with Eurydice, but after she is killed fatally Orpheus travels to the Underworld (with the help of Hermes, whose job it is in certain tales to guide people to the Underworld). He finds her and after singing a song for Hades and Persephone is given permission to take her back, but Hades gives him the condition that Orpheus must lead with Eurydice behind him, and he is not allowed to look back. During the journey back Orpheus is overcome with distrust that Eurydice is behind him, and just when they're reaching the surface he looks back – only to learn she was behind him the whole time. She is sent back to the Underworld, and Orpheus is doomed to wander the Earth aware of what he's done.

Changes in Hadestown: Eurydice makes the choice to go to Hadestown and is not technically killed. However, the show still references this with the lyric “songbird vs rattlesnake” in “When the Chips Are Down” (as well as an ominous rattling noise).

The Tale of Hades and Persephone:

Hades falls in love with the daughter of Demeter, Persephone, while she is picking flowers in her mother's field. He kidnaps her and takes her to the Underworld. Persephone is given the instruction that she must not eat anything, but while in Hades' garden she eats six seeds of a pomegranate: because of this, she must stay in the Underworld for six months each year (marking autumn and winter) with her husband Hades – the other six months (spring and summer) she spends with her mother up on the surface.

Changes in Hadestown: The main difference is that Persephone is Hades' wife by choice, and is not technically trapped: they truly love each other but their marriage is on the rocks. In the world of *Hadestown*, a changing climate where there seems to only be 9 months of winter and 3 months of summer is blamed on Persephone and Hades' failing marriage.

For More Information:

<https://www.theoi.com/articles/the-tragic-myth-about-orpheus-and-eurydice/>

<https://www.theoi.com/articles/myths-about-persephone-and-hades-in-greek-mythology/>

Characters (Greek mythology)

- **ORPHEUS:** Son of the muse of epic poetry, engaged to marry Eurydice. With his golden voice and lyre, Orpheus charmed all living things, even rocks and stones.

- EURYDICE: A dryad, or tree nymph, engaged to marry Orpheus. On the day of the wedding, she was bitten by a poisonous snake, died, and descended to the underworld.
- HADES; God of the dead, ruler of the underworld, sometimes called “the Wealthy One.” He fell in love with, abducted, and married Persephone. Her mother, goddess of the harvest, refused to bless the earth while Persephone was below.
- PERSEPHONE: Goddess of the seasons, flowers, fruit, and grain. By arrangement, she spent half the year with Hades in the Underworld, causing fall and winter above. The other half she returned to her mother, bringing spring and summer with her.
- HERMES: Fleet-foot guide, messenger of the gods, and conductor of souls to the underworld. In some tellings, it is Hermes who taught Orpheus to play the lyre.
- THE FATES: Three goddesses who together determined and destinies of mortals, measuring their lifespans and apportioning their suffering. CLOTHO spun the thread of life, LACHESIS measured it, and ATROPOS cut it.
- THE CHORUS: In ancient Greek theatre, the Chorus sang spoke, and danced in unison. Often representing the voice of the citizens, the Chorus commented on the actions of characters and served as an emotional conduit for the audience. (Here, the members of the Chorus play the roles of the WORKERS.)

WALLS



Perhaps the most infamous song in *Hadestown* is Hades' anthem, "Why We Build The Wall", where he and the residents of Hadestown sing about his goal to build a massive wall around Hadestown to keep their freedom and keep out others. This rhetoric may remind you of a certain political figure, and you may come off with the impression that *Hadestown* is being a little on the nose. The issue with that, however, is "Why We Build The Wall" predates said political figure by a good ten years: it's been a part of the show since 2006.

Anais Mitchell characterizes this coincidence as related to the general idea of walls as a symbol of division, which predates certain 21st century political rhetoric: when she wrote the song, she was thinking of the Berlin Wall, which divided East and West Berlin from 1961-1989, as well as gated communities and the Great Wall of China. In *Hadestown*, Hades is a steel tycoon obsessed with a walled off underworld where the goal is economic security despite torturous conditions, and the enemy is poverty and hunger. It is purely a coincidence that a certain 2016 political candidate began using walls as a rallying cry.

Hadestown was speeding up on its development in 2016 (including a full production that summer in New York), and the election that year left the creative team with the question of whether or not to emphasize the connection. Ultimately they decided against it, but the connection is still very hard to ignore: in Edmonton in 2017, the mood was reported as somber due to the recent election; in London in 2018, the audience was reminded of Brexit. On Broadway, audience members have been seen walking out of the theater during this song. This is despite the fact that the production has done nothing to emphasize connections to current events: it's ultimately up to the audience how they interpret it.

[Read this 2016 HuffPo article by Anais Mitchell written on the eve of the election, where she shares her thoughts on the connection between the song and current events.](#)

TRACKING THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS

By Kenjiro Lee

Hey.

Hey you.

Yeah, you. Be honest: did you watch a *Hadestown* bootleg on YouTube as research for this show instead of reading the libretto?

No need to feel shame, all of us watch bootlegs at some point in our lives. Unfortunately, I have some bad news: the version of the show you watched may not have been the version we're performing this week.

See, *Hadestown* is somewhat unique in the realm of musicals because its development has been rather public: Mitchell's 2010 concept album featuring the music of the original folk opera that she threw together with friends back in 2006; the New York Theatre Workshop production that opened Off-Broadway that became a hit and later got a live cast recording; the Edmonton, Canada production; the National Theatre production; and finally, the Broadway production, the script of which we are performing this week.

But that's the thing: despite the fact all of these productions were official and highly public (not to mention they contributed to *Hadestown*'s growing fanbase), the show was always treated by its production team as a developing work. As a result, *a lot* changed between different productions: characterizations were changed, songs were added, and entire verses were removed, right up until opening night on Broadway.

The Curious Case of Reeve Carney's Orpheus

When *Hadestown* opened at NYTW in 2016, Orpheus was played by Damon Daunno, who some might recognize for his role in the recent revival of *Oklahoma*. Daunno's Orpheus was much grungier, having more of a rock singer vibe. He was much more confident and said some (admittedly cheesy) lines about love. This is the version of the character on the Off-Broadway cast album.





Reeve Carney took over the role for a 2017 workshop at New 42nd Street Studios and reprised the role in Edmonton, Canada. This Orpheus was very similar to Damon Daunno's interpretation, carrying the same grungy rock singer vibe with a haircut to match. This interpretation of the character carried over into London, which is where many of the elements that carried over to Broadway were finalized. Behind the scenes, however, the creative team realized that Orpheus as a character was rather unsympathetic – he straight up ignores Eurydice in favor of worrying

about his music. It also makes his heel-turn of distrusting Eurydice during the walk out of *Hadestown* more questionable: he has been confident and street-smart for the whole show, why did this suddenly change after he basically led a revolution?

Carney reprised the role for the Broadway production, but the character was changed almost completely. Orpheus is now portrayed as more innocent and unaware of the troubles of the world – some fans have noted he appears to be coded as neurodivergent. This specifically contrasts with Eurydice's more world-weary worldview, where Orpheus's distraction is less a matter of pride and more he simply doesn't understand the world that well. This also changes his motivations for turning around at the end of "Doubt Comes In": he was innocent and naive to the world, and his experiences in *Hadestown* made him more cynical and less sure of himself.

If you're not sure which *Hadestown* bootleg you're watching, check if Orpheus is wearing denim or if he has bangs. If he's wearing denim, it's London and it's the wrong version of the show. If he has bangs, it's Broadway and it's the version we're doing.



Hermes

Hermes' characterization also changed over the course of production. At NYTW and in Edmonton, Hermes was portrayed as more of a hobo character, with clothing and a gruff voice to match. He served more as a mischievous neutral force in the story, putting him on a similar playing field to the Fates. He was played by Chris

Sullivan in New York and Kingsley Leggs in Edmonton.



When Andre De Shields took on the role in workshops and in London, Hermes' characterization changed to fit De Shields' interpretation of the character. This version is older and carries an almost regal vibe, with his clothing all silver (matching De Shields' own grey hair). Between London and Broadway Hermes also gained the role as a mentor figure to Orpheus, thereby establishing him as having a more active role in the proceedings of the musical. This is, of course, the version of the character that opened on Broadway and whom De Shields won a Tony Award for playing.



And this is me, at BroadwayCon in 2019, cosplaying as the NYTW Hermes, with my friend Victoria as Eurydice during Act 2.



(Yeah, we're nerds. Keep scrolling.)

A big takeaway you should get from all of this, with both Hermes and Orpheus (indeed any character), is that *Hadestown* and its characters are open to interpretation by whoever performs them. It depends on what fits the performance of the actors.

Different Lyrics/Songs

Over the course of *Hadestown*'s development, Anais Mitchell and Rachel Chavkin closely collaborated on changes to the lyrics, including some new lyrics to songs that had already been publicly released. Notable changes include:

- “Way Down Hadestown”: Originally (as early as 2006), this song was sung by the entire cast, as a way of introducing the monolith of Hadestown to the audience. Since London, Orpheus no longer sings this song at all and Eurydice only gets the line “kind of makes you wonder how it feels”: now the song serves as Hermes, Persephone, and the Fates’ way of introducing the concept of Hadestown to the audience *and* Orpheus and Eurydice. By removing Orpheus and Eurydice’s prior knowledge of Hadestown, it makes their journey of discovering it more pronounced.
- “Chant (reprise)”: The original version of this song saw Hades and Persephone individually comparing their relationship with that of Orpheus and Eurydice’s. Hades offers a pessimistic view, while Persephone offers a more hopeful one. However, Persephone’s verse was removed a few weeks into Broadway previews: the creative team made the choice to cut it despite reluctance for a number of reasons:
 - The verse was redundant in terms of dramaturgy, as Persephone already offered her view on her and Hades’ relationship in “How Long?”
 - The contrast the verse provided was also redundant, because the Workers’ Chorus (added in Edmonton) offered a more ensemble-based rejection of Hades’ logic.
 - The addition of the Workers’ Chorus made the song too long.
 - The missing verse is reprinted below:

“When I was a young girl like you
 This old world was younger too
 We set it spinning hand in hand
 Me and a young man
 Now you see what he’s become
 Hades and his heart of stone
 I forgot what true love was
 And then I heard your Orpheus
 Take it from a woman of my age
 There is nothing love can’t change
 Even where the bricks are stacked
 Love is blooming through the cracks
 Even when the light is gone
 Love is reaching for the sun

It was love that spun the world
When I was a young girl.”

- “I Raise My Cup/We Raise Our Cups”: In the original folk opera and in the concept album, this song was sung by a depressed Eurydice singing in a bar in the underworld, disappointed in her fate and with Orpheus, eventually joined by Persephone. The song remained across different versions, but Persephone took lead beginning at NYTW. Its original function was to close the show, but the addition of “Road to Hell (reprise)” created an odd second ending. Eventually it was decided that rather than cut the well-known tune, it would now be placed during the curtain call, as a way of saying goodbye to the audience after the more emotionally charged “Road to Hell (reprise).”

GLOSSARY

(Well would you look at that. You made it this far. Good for you. You've claimed your "I actually read most of the dramaturgy packet" card.)

Page numbers noted correspond with those listed in the libretto. If you try to look in the score for these, you will have a very bad time.

Act 1

- 1: Road to Hell
 - "It was the road to Hell" (2): The Underworld is often depicted as a destination that one can travel to.
 - "With a suitcase full of summertime" (4): Persephone is said to bring in spring and summer.
 - "Where the sun don't shine and it's always shady" (4): As in the Underworld.
 - "And a man with feathers on his feet" (5): In Greek mythology, Hermes is often depicted as wearing shoes with feathers on them.
 - "His mama was a friend of mine, and this boy was a muse's son" (6): Orpheus is the son of the muse of epic poetry and Apollo in the original myth, although his link to Apollo appears to have been skipped over in this version of the show.
 - "You might say the boy was touched" (7): The Broadway Orpheus is often considered to be coded as autistic.
- 2: Any Way the Wind Blows
 - "Ain't no spring or fall at all anymore/It's either blazing hot or freezing cold" (9): Climate change. Persephone's shorter visits mean shorter hot months and longer cold months.
 - "Always singing in the back of your mind/Wherever it was this young girl went,/The Fates were close behind" (10): The Fates are very much a malevolent force in this show.
- 3: Come Home With Me
 - "The man who's gonna marry you" and others (13): Orpheus sings with the Chorus to emphasize his blessed singing voice.
 - "I also play the lyre" "Oh, a liar and a player too!" (13): Eurydice makes a pun to express her doubt of Orpheus' intentions. This is a leftover from prior interpretations of Orpheus where he was much cockier.
 - "I haven't seen a spring or fall" (14): Again, climate change.
- 4: Wedding Song
 - "All the rivers/trees/birds will sing along" (15-17): Orpheus' singing voice is said to be so beautiful it can charm nature.
- 5: Epic I
 - This song is essentially a retelling of the Hades and Persephone tale. *Hadestown* forgoes the kidnapping aspect of the original tale in favor of giving Persephone agency: she really does love Hades, but she has to go to the surface for part of the year so people can survive.

- "...who walked up above in her mother's green field... who was gathering flowers in the light of the sun" (18-19): In the original Greek myth, Hades kidnapped Persephone from her mother Demeter's fields.
- 6: Livin' It Up On Top
 - "And you're late again!" (21): Remember that random snowstorm we had this month? Guess Persephone was late again.
 - "But let me tell you something that my mama said to me" (23): Persephone is referring to her mother Demeter, the goddess of the harvest.
 - "Anyone want a drink?" (24): At NYTW, Persephone said this directly to an audience member and forced a drink into the poor schmuck's hand. On Broadway she delivers this line to the audience, but doesn't get a response and shrugs it off.
- 7: All I've Ever Known
 - The definition of irony.
- 8: Way Down Hadestown
 - "That was not six months!" (29): Shorter summer months.
 - "On the underside/On the yonder side/On the other side of his wall" (30): As in the underworld.
 - "Winter's nigh and summers' o'er" (31): No autumn to come.
 - "A bunch of stiffs/Brother I'll be bored to death" (31): Literally there's a bunch of people down there in the underworld.
 - "Give me morphine in a tin/Gimme a crate of the fruit of the vine" (31): A crate of wine. Amber Gray, who has played Persephone throughout the show's development, interprets Persephone as self-medicating due to her failing marriage with Hades.
 - "It's a graveyard in Hadestown" (32): Another joke.
 - "--to the bottom of a Sing Sing Cell" (33): Sing Sing is an infamous prison in Upstate New York.
- 10: Epic II
 - "The River Styx is a river of stones" (37): The River Styx is the barrier to the Underworld, replaced in this story by Hades' wall.
- 11: Chant
 - TBD
- 12: Hey Little Songbird
 - TBD
- 13: When the Chips Are Down
 - TBD
- 14: Gone I'm Gone
 - TBD
- 15: Wait For Me
 - "You'll find another muse somewhere" (50): As in Eurydice as an artistic inspiration.
 - "Course there is another way/But nah, I ain't supposed to say" (52): The alternate route to Hadestown, or the Greek Underworld, is a walkable path.
 - "River Styx is high and wide,/Cinder bricks and razor wire,/Walls of iron and concrete" (53): Again, the River Styx is a wall.

- “Hound dogs howling ‘round the gate./Those dogs’ll lay down and play dead” (53): This appears to be a reference to Cerberus, the three-headed dog who guards the Greek Underworld. Cerberus was actually a character in earlier editions of *Hadestown*, but as the human security officer to Hades, played by Sara Grace. The character was gone long before the show opened in New York in 2016.
- The Fates’ chorus (53-54): The Fates are voicing Orpheus’s thoughts here.
- “On the lam” (54): As in running away.
- “Sunday best” (54): Clothing you reserve to wear for church.
- “Stuff your mouth with cotton” (54): This an embalming technique used to prevent the leakage of bodily fluids.
- 16: Why We Build the Wall
 - This song literally builds on itself in how it repeats: Hades is building a wall of a song as much as he is building a literal wall.
 - “A lot can happen behind closed doors” (58): Earlier editions of *Hadestown* explicitly implied Hades seduced Eurydice in this moment. This has since been changed to simply innuendo, and Patrick Page (who has played Hades since 2016) believes Hades is simply trying to make an observing Persephone jealous.
 - “Anybody want a drink?” (58): Persephone addresses this to the audience, signalling the end of Act 1 and the start of intermission. Literally, “Time for a break, go get a drink at the bar in the lobby.”

Act 2

- 17: Our Lady of the Underground
 - Persephone is scripted as being drunk for the entirety of this song.
 - “Step into my office” (59): Callback to Hades’ last line in the first act.
 - “Six-feet-under/Getting under your skin” (59): To be “six feet under” means to be buried in a grave.
 - Hermes and the Workers’ call and response (59-61): In most productions Persephone aims her microphone out at the audience, hoping for a response. The audience singing along is rare, mostly because direct interaction with the audience has not been a thing in the show up to this point. However, Rachel Chavkin and Amber Gray have confirmed they want people who know the song to sing along during this part.
 - Persephone introducing the band (60-61): Persephone is literally introducing, by name and instrument, the entire *Hadestown* Broadway band. This dialogue is changed depending on who is actually on for that particular performance. We’ve got two musicians helping us for our lab: make sure to highlight them!
 - “She’s right here waiting in my pay-per-view” (61): Sounds like Persephone’s entertainment is in what counts for television in the world of *Hadestown*.
 - “A little moonshine ain’t no sin” (61): Both the light of the moon and the alcoholic beverage.
- 18: Way Down Hadestown (Reprise)
 - TBD
- 19: Flowers

- “I trembled when he laid me out/You won’t feel a thing, he said, when you go down” (67): an example of innuendo, leftover from the show’s originally explicit claim that Hades seduced Eurydice.
- 20: Come Home With Me (Reprise)
 - TBD
- 21: Papers
 - TBD
- 22: Nothing Changes
 - TBD
- 23: If It’s True
 - TBD
- 24: How Long?
 - TBD
- 25: Chant (reprise)
 - TBD
- 26: Epic III
 - TBD
- 27: Promises
 - TBD
- 28: Word to the Wise
 - TBD
- 29: His Kiss, the Riot
 - TBD
- 30: Wait for Me (Reprise)
 - TBD
- 31: Doubt Comes In
 - TBD
- 32: Road to Hell (Reprise)
 - This song heavily implies that the story of *Hadestown* plays on a loop, with the hope that one day the ending will change.
- 33: We Raise Our Cups