

Stanton Welch AM
SYLVIA
Underwritten by Phoebe and Bobby Tudor

Three women's journey force two worlds to collide in one epic performance

ACT I

ARTEMIS

We open on a battlefield where the twin gods Artemis and Apollo slay Queen Niobe's army in revenge for a slight to their mother, Leto. Zeus, the twins' father, arrives from Olympus with Leto to congratulate them. He favors Apollo which makes Artemis unhappy, so her dear friend Orion comforts her. Eros, son of the love goddess Aphrodite, teases them. Artemis shoots arrows in Eros' direction and leaves with Orion to hunt. Apollo, who is used to being everyone's favorite, is jealous of the bond between Artemis and Orion. To spite Artemis, he seduces Callisto, one of the nymphs in her army. Artemis and Orion revel in each other's company, but when her army arrives, she must bid Orion farewell. As Artemis and her army are preparing to hunt, Callisto and Apollo arrive. Callisto claims she has been attacked. Artemis is furious and wants to kill the attacker. Apollo points off in the distance, but Artemis cannot see who it is. Apollo guides her, and Artemis' arrow finds Orion. He dies in her arms. Artemis realizes she has been tricked. Apollo escapes her wrath, but, in revenge for her loss, Artemis turns Callisto into a bear. Showing none of the pain she feels, Artemis gathers her retinue and leaves. When she finds herself alone, she breaks down as she remembers her friend Orion. Her army returns, and she seizes command of her emotions.

PSYCHE

Eros is plotting his revenge on Artemis for shooting an arrow at him when Iris, messenger to the gods, arrives with news from his mother. A young mortal girl, Psyche, has surpassed her in beauty. Iris shows Aphrodite a vision of Psyche walking in the forest. Enraged, she sends her son to kill Psyche. Instead, Eros, dressed as a mortal and disguised by a mask, falls in love with her, and she with him. As Psyche and her family prepare for her wedding to Eros, her sisters encourage her to look under his mask, but she has promised him she will not. Eros arrives in his disguise and the two are married. While she is in bed with Eros, Psyche's curiosity gets the best of her, and she looks under his mask. The oil from her lamp burns Eros and awakens him. Feeling betrayed, he leaves her. The distraught Psyche runs to her family, and they advise her to go to Aphrodite. She does, and Aphrodite promises to help her.

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The arrival of Artemis and her army of nymphs disturbs a melancholy Shepherd who is resting in a clearing. When the army continues their journey, only one, Sylvia, stays behind because her heart is not in it. Sylvia removes her armor to bathe, and Eros, who has been spying on her, casts a spell that will make her fall in love with the first person she sees. The Shepherd returns, and when Sylvia sees him, she falls madly in love. They depart, leaving her armor behind. Alpheus, an evil River God, sees that she is vulnerable and summons his henchmen. Sylvia and the Shepherd, now deeply in love, are captured by Alpheus and his River Gang. They knock the Shepherd unconscious and abduct Sylvia. The Shepherd wakes and devises a plan for her rescue.

ACT II

Sylvia is left alone in Alpheus' lair. The Shepherd breaks into her cell, bringing her armor and sword. When Alpheus and his gang return, she fights them all, finally cornering Alpheus, who escapes by melting into water.

Meanwhile, Aphrodite tells Psyche about her plan to get Eros back. Psyche must travel to Prosperina, Queen of the Underworld, to retrieve a box. Prosperina makes her promise not to look in the box, but Psyche gives in to her curiosity and opens it. Poisoned, she falls down dead. Psyche's family is desperately calling for help. Eros enters and knows that only an Olympian can bring Psyche back to life. He sees Sylvia and begs her to call on Artemis. Although Sylvia fears the goddess will be angry at her for running off with the Shepherd, she agrees. Artemis arrives and is indeed furious with Sylvia for her betrayal and threatens to kill the Shepherd. Eros admits that he cast a love spell on Sylvia. He removes it, and Sylvia returns to Artemis' army of nymphs. Eros asks Artemis to spare the Shepherd's life. She agrees, and a heartbroken Shepherd bids a sad farewell to Sylvia. Artemis turns her focus back to Psyche and brings her back to life. The reunited lovers rush off to celebrate. Sylvia stays behind. Realizing that she still has feelings for the Shepherd, she pleads with Artemis to release her from the army and let her be with her love. Artemis agrees; Sylvia leaves to find the Shepherd.

ACT III

At a celebration of Psyche and Eros' love, Zeus blesses them and makes Psyche a Demi-God, ensuring they can be together for all of eternity.

Sylvia finds the Shepherd on his farm and joins him in the simple life. They marry and have children, then grandchildren. The Shepherd grows old. Feeling the end approach, he rests in

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Sylvia's arms, remembering their happiness. Eros returns with Psyche and, as a final gift to Sylvia, transforms the Shepherd into a Demi-God. Everyone exults in the Shepherd and Sylvia's, and Eros and Psyche's immortal lives and love.

Artemis confronts Apollo in front of the other Gods. They battle, but Zeus stops them and asks everyone but Artemis to go. He recognizes his daughter's pain, and reunites Artemis and Orion in the heavens for all eternity.