

“ἄείσω ξυνετοῖσι’ I will sing to those in the know:
Orphic Resonances in the Music of Daemonia Nymphe”

This paper presents an analysis of the Greek neoclassical band Daemonia Nymphe's innovative incorporation of Orphic material into their musical compositions. Drawing upon interdisciplinary perspectives from musicology, classical studies, and cultural anthropology, I aim to explore the band's unique artistic approach to invoking the mysticism and spiritual essence of ancient Orphic traditions within contemporary music informed by historical practices. The paper begins by providing an overview of the historical and cultural context of Orphism, a mystical religious movement that emerged in ancient Greece and explores the central tenets of the texts set to music by Daemonia Nymphe, the *Orphic Hymns*. Building upon this foundation, the paper then delves into the incorporation of the *Orphic Hymns* into two of the band's albums. I examine the band's adept use of various musical techniques blending informed early-music performance and modern stagecraft. I aim to explore the Orphic resonances in two of their songs: “Nymphs of the Seagod Nereus,” a setting of *Orphic Hymn XXIV* to the Nereids from their eponymous 2002 album, and “Calling of Naiades,” a partial setting of *Orphic Hymn LI* from their 2004 album *Bacchic Dance of The Nymphs*. This paper aims to show the popular reception of early musical practices drawing on the theoretical work of classical musicologists such as Armand D'Angour, Sean Gurd (2022), and Annie Bélis (1985). Through a close reading of these two songs I aim to show how, by intertwining ancient mythology with modern musical expression and historically-informed musical practice, Daemonia Nymphe forge a bridge between the past and the present, enabling listeners to experience the allure of Orphic poetry as it may have sounded during an initiation into the Orphic Mysteries.

Select Bibliography

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