



Can you guess which Greek mythological character is referenced in this sculpture by artist **Alan Shepp**?





A wooden log is positioned horizontally, with a dark metal roof visible in the background. The log is part of a quiz interface.

WHICH MYTHOLOGICAL
CHARACTER IS THIS NAMED FOR?

☐ A Zeus

☐ B Perseus

☐ C Orpheus

☐ D Athena



Answer:
Orpheus





Alan Shepp
Orfeo, 1995

Texas pink granite and red volcanic gneiss

Alan Shepp, b. 1935

Cleveland, Ohio. Shepp lives in Napa, California, and is a multimedia artist who creates large scale sculpture and public art. In the mid-1970s he decided to focus his creativity on sculpture in stone. He has a BFA from the Cleveland Institute of Art and an MFA from the University of Washington.



This sculpture is titled *Orfeo* which is the Italian spelling of the name of the mythological character **Orpheus**.

If you walk around the piece, you will notice that from above it resembles the shape of a **lyre**.



Roman mosiac depicting Orpheus, AD 194

Orpheus was a **musician**, poet and **prophet** in mythology. His parents were the king of Thrace and the muse Calliope. He was considered the best musician and poet of all, and he **perfected the lyre**. His music had the ability to charm the animals and make the trees dance.

Eurydice was the wife of Orpheus and she died unexpectedly. Distraught, Orpheus traveled to the Underworld to retrieve her. His music softened the hearts of Hades and Persephone, so they allowed him to take Eurydice back. The condition was that he must walk in front of her and **not look back until both had reached the upper world**. The whole time, Orpheus worried that he was being deceived. Just as he reached the portals of Hades, he turned around to gaze on her face, and because she had not yet crossed the threshold, Eurydice vanished back into the Underworld.

**“Miserbale Orpheus who,
turning to lose his Eurydice,
beholds her for the first time
as well as the last.”**

-Cyril Connolly