

Falling to Earth

By Tom Gualtieri & David Sisco

Synopsis

Falling to Earth is a re-telling of the Pygmalion myth, set in ancient Cyprus, but filtered through a skewed, contemporary lens.

Pygmalion, who has been commissioned to create a statue of Venus, is having trouble finishing in time for the Festival. When his best friend, Paphos, tries to get his creative juices flowing, the artist explains his problem is not a creative block but a personal one; he wants to lead a more meaningful life. Just as Paphos has convinced his friend to take a night on the town, they are visited by a "serving girl." Venus, in disguise as Anadyomene, claims that she has been sent by the Temple to insure Pygmalion completes the statue. Pygmalion reluctantly accepts her into his home.

After days of partying, Pygmalion still hasn't found inspiration and Venus is losing patience. They argue and he claims that no one is interested in the gods anyway. Venus is stricken but keeps her cool as Paphos drags her off to market, leaving Pygmalion to work. He is about to give up when a voice within the stone calls to him.

As Pygmalion works, Paphos challenges "Ana," insisting that she is not a real serving girl. He tries to seduce her. Flattered by his affection, Venus begins her own seduction – kissing Paphos, who promptly passes out. Meanwhile, Pygmalion has uncovered the mysterious voice within the stone: he has created a masterpiece and is beguiled by it.

When Venus returns home to find the statue near-completion, she is thrilled, believing it to be her own likeness. The next morning, as Pygmalion collects flowers for his statue, Paphos finds Venus alone and declares that he has guessed her identity. She explains that he must not say anything until she finally reveals herself at the Festival.

Paphos, barely able to keep his secret, urges Pygmalion to finish the statue. Pygmalion explains he has given up the commission; what he is making now is "better than Venus." Overhearing this, Venus angrily reveals herself but is so stunned by Galatea's beauty that she is unable to issue punishment. She orders Pygmalion to create a more impressive likeness with herself as model. Pygmalion locks himself in the Temple until the statue is complete. Venus is pleased and brings Galatea to life.

Act II finds a bored Galatea whose complaints bring Venus to Earth. As usual, Paphos also drops in. Galatea begs to prepare a feast for the goddess; this, however, will require a visit to market, something Pygmalion is reluctant to do. With the lovers gone, Venus seduces Paphos. On the road to market, Galatea argues with Pygmalion about his over-protectiveness.

After making love, Paphos professes his feelings for Venus but she resists, claiming she cannot fall in love with a mortal. Galatea and Pygmalion return, still arguing, and the dinner party disintegrates into a heated argument among the lovers. In his frustration, Pygmalion tells Venus she is no longer welcome. Venus, hurt and confused, leaves, soon followed by Paphos. Galatea, terrified of Venus' anger, confronts Pygmalion, who reveals his true feelings: "You belong to me!" Galatea flees. That evening, Galatea finds Paphos in the woods. Wounded by their lovers, the two find comfort in each others' arms. Venus, meanwhile, admits to herself that she knows less about love – and her own feelings – than she once thought.

Venus and Pygmalion return to the studio after a night of searching and attempt to make amends. When Galatea arrives, followed by Paphos, she tells of their night together, explaining that Pygmalion has never truly loved her; he has only seen her as his object of desire. She leaves him. Venus declares that she has made a mess of things, but that each one of them is also implicated and everyone must have a suitable punishment. She sends Paphos to the other side of the island where he will build a temple in her honor. Her own punishment is that "the gods must live with themselves." Paphos sets off to fulfill Venus' decree - resigned to a bittersweet separation.

Pygmalion, having lost Galatea, seeks solace in Venus. For the first time in her life, Venus apologizes; she is as much to blame as anyone. She explains that the only punishment for Pygmalion is to create a new statue of Venus – a modern Venus whose beauty and divinity are balanced by remorse and humility. Pygmalion, contrite and relieved to be working again, asks if she will be his model. The musical ends as the two find common ground in their humanity and set to work on a new image of the divine: perfection within the imperfect.

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Characters

Pygmalion.....	A gifted artist
Paphos	His friend
Venus	The goddess of love
Galatea	His creation

Setting

Pygmalion's studio on the island of Cyprus, in the time of myths, or thereabouts.

Songs*
Act One

1. Invocation	Orchestra & Mysterious Voices
2. That's What I See	Paphos & Pygmalion
3. Do the Best You Can	Venus
4. Run Away	Pygmalion & Galatea
5. Something Happened/What Happens	All
6. Just Another Serving Girl	Paphos
7. Better Than Venus	Venus
8. Something More.....	Galatea
9. The Judgment & The Appeal/ w/Paphos' Song.....	Venus & Paphos
10. What Happens (Reprise)	Pygmalion & Galatea

Act Two

11. Things in Cyprus	Galatea
12. Paphos' Song (Venus Reprise).....	Venus
13. Harder Than it Seems.....	All
14. You Don't Know Love	Venus
15. I Saw You In the Stone	Pygmalion
16. Let Me Go.....	Galatea
17. The New Commission.....	Venus

* Items in bold may be heard on our media page at www.gualtieriandsisco.com.