



THE CIRCLE OF THE HORIZON IS THE EARTH AND SKY'S EMBRACE

SKY'S EMBRACE

A Publication of Horizon Oasis, OTO

rites of Eleusis: Being the Voice of a God BY JON SEWELL

THERE have been a few times lately when people have asked me why I do these musicals, or how I find time, or something similar. First I have to say that I don't do them alone. I talk about my experiences, and sometimes I go on at great length, but that is because this is close to my heart. I don't wish to diminish the role of the others who have been involved. I am grateful to them, one and all, and I am quite aware that I rely upon them more than I can say in words. So when I write about my experience, I write from my point of view, as one star in the company of stars. The why and how are a long story, and when telling a story, I suppose it is best to start at the beginning.

Composing music for all of Aleister Crowley's *Rites of Eleusis* was not something I initially set out to do. It was going to be a one-time thing, working with *The Rite of Jupiter* in the spring of 2001.

But something about it resonated with me, and so I started working with Melissa on *The Rite of Luna* in the summer of 2002. The music for *Luna* started out with some simple chord progressions that I liked to play with. These eventually became the songs "Uncharmable Charmer" and "Priestess of Panormita". Melissa composed flute arrangements for "Uncharmable Charmer," and I built on those to create the music for much of the incidental vocal parts. We were really trying to create this dream-like image with the music for *Luna*, and the long instrumental sections were something that gave us some trouble when we started blocking out the show.



Sewell as Mercury

So much of the first half of the performance was slow and languid that we were honestly concerned about whether we would have an audience left for the second half. That is the main reason there was no intermission. But we wanted to create a mood, just so we could break it in the second half of the show. Melissa and Amanda Hauk really must take credit for much of what worked in *The Rite of Luna*. I had grown obsessed with playing Pan, and was something of a freak to work with. Most of what was happening when I was not on stage was the inspiration of others.

So we found Allen Lester through Craigslist, and he offered to edit the footage into a usable format, and in return he got to add a full-length feature

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to his portfolio. It is just as well that he took over. Within a week of completing *Luna*, Melissa and I had already started composing music for *The Rite of Venus*.

It became obvious at that point that we were going to try to present all of the *Rites* as musicals, with a similar style and feel. The thought was to create a body of work, like a Wagnerian Ring cycle, that encompassed the full series. I think the realization that our goal was so much larger had an effect on the composition and planning that went into *Venus*.

When composing for *Venus*, there was a huge difference in our approach. First of all, we decided on using a sort of hybrid middle-eastern style, because we wanted to incorporate belly dance into the performance. Many of the drum tracks created for *The Rite of Venus* are based on traditional belly dance rhythms supplied to me by Tiphany Overzat. Melissa kept bringing me obscure tracks, and I kept playing with the ideas. Secondly, we found that the use of repetition of specific lines created more of a “song-like” feel to the music, while re-enforcing specific aspects of the narrative that we thought important.

There were aspects of our personal lives that came into play when doing the music and planning the performance. Some aspects of *Venus* are still resonating with us now, but that is the way of things.

The production of *Venus* was so much more ambitious than that of *Luna*, and we shaved a year off of the timetable we had followed on the previous production. Two years from composition through stage production is rather a quick turn around, especially when you have a day job, or in my case, when you were going to school to retrain for a different career.

We auditioned belly dancers, worked with new directors Andrew Bryce and Andrei Freeman, brought in Alex Remon as our new videographer, and convinced everyone we could find who was willing to help us out to get involved. Bigger sets, lots of people on stage, choral arrangements, sensuality and death.

It was an opera. And we got some glowing reviews. But it was much more challenging than

Luna had been. Many of our best ideas were lost amid the contending forces backstage. The material was more painful, and the effect of reliving it repeatedly for months of rehearsal and seven performances was brutal.

By the end, I think we were all grateful that the ordeal was over. Not that we were regretful, but there was a period of feeling like you are coming home after a long, difficult journey. The journey was filled with wonders, but the homecoming was grand.

It was several months after the close of *Venus* before I started composing music for *The Rite of Mercury*. And when I did, I went to the well that was closest to home. The music I’ve composed for *The Rite of Mercury* is based upon music that I started composing when I was in my late teens. I go back over the years to find themes that have stayed with me over time, and these became the foundation for the parts I composed. Melissa wrote some beautiful music for *Mercury* as well, and our friend Paula composed the first half of the “Invocation of Thoth”, and both of them, with their superior understanding of harmony, have shaped the choral parts for *Mercury*. Yet for me, much of *Mercury* is very personal because it reminds me of a time when I was first putting together my ideas about what music is, and how it should touch the people it is shared with.

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Themes from *Venus* and *Luna* are also woven in, as *Mercury* ties together the narrative of the *Rites* that we have already completed.

I must also admit that it is during the time that I have devoted to Mercury that I have done the most extensive study of Crowley's work in relationship to these Rites. He clearly had great hope for them, and in some ways they seem to have altered his approach to magick.

It all seems overwhelming when set against the backdrop of a day-to-day life; going to work, playing with the family, seeing friends. It is something outside of the normal experience that people have. Yet, it is in playing these roles that I get to know what it is, even for a few moments, to be the voice of a God.

JON SEWELL is the Body Master of Horizon Oasis OTO, and a fine performer, singer, guitarist and composer. With his partner, Melissa Holm, Sewell is currently setting Aleister Crowley's Rites of Eleusis to music in a rock opera format. More information at www.eleusyve.com.

THE ANDROGYNE

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to see him dancing on the edge of the stage singing "everybody needs somebody to love... and I need You, You, You..." pointing at the beautiful people in the crowd without any discernible concern for their gender... he's still got that Dionysian charm!

The revolutionary ideas and exemplary life of Aleister Crowley a century ago helped to further open the door to living as we will – we claim the right to think, speak and write what we will, to dress as we will and to love as we will, when, where and with whom we will. Such freedom never comes without a price, and that is a cause we have in common with the GBLT community; whether our personal memberships overlap or not. The Androgyne is an important member of our magickal community, and, I believe, is a blessing as a welcomed guest!

MARK DALTON is currently the librarian and publications manager at Horizon Oasis OTO. A long-time habitué of Seattle nightlife, he can also be found playing his bass in various venues around the area.

TWO AFFIRMATIONS

BY

FRATER TOM ARMSTRONG

I AM THE STRENGTH
OF LOVE
I HOLD MY COURAGE
AND STAND
THE BRIGHTNESS THAT
BURNS WITHIN
I AM THE FIRE OF NUIT
I AM THE STAR HADIT!

OUT OF THE FIRE AND
INTO THE WATER
OUT OF THE WATER AND
INTO THE STONE
THE BREATH IN MY BLOOD
IT EVER WANDERS
I FEEL THE FIRE IN MY
BLOOD!

THE ANDROGYNE BY MARK DALTON

“This sense of perfection and wholeness was symbolized in alchemy by the Androgyne, a divine and unified being that is both male and female.

The Androgyne is a symbol of the undifferentiated consciousness sought by the alchemists, in which all opposites are reconciled.”

- Nadia Choucha, *Surrealism and the Occult*

THE ANDROGYNE has been a powerful figure in alchemy and in the general practice of magick and religion for thousands of years. Androgyny was a reoccurring theme in the Egyptian tradition, and there is some evidence that the androgynous depictions of the monotheistic pharaoh, Akhenaten, were related to his sun-disc deity, the Aten, being considered “the mother and father of all humankind.” The Egyptian water and fertility god, Hapi, also had androgynous qualities, and was purposely associated with the Aten by Akhenaten, according to historian Carolyn Seawright.

According to Wade Baskin in *The Sorcerer's Handbook*, Adam is depicted in the Talmud as being originally created as an androgynous being... and at the heart of the Platonic theme of love is the desire for reunification, male and female, “halves into wholeness.” Baskin continues on to say “in recent times magicians... have often considered one of the first steps in their undertaking to be the development of their own androgynous natures.” According to the French writer Jaques Sadoul, the Androgyne represents a “name for the prime matter containing the male and female principles – that is, philosophers’ sulphur and mercury.”

The Greek god Dionysus had clearly androgynous characteristics and was a being of great beauty. This went rather well with his duties as a god of wine, ritual madness and ecstasy, accompanied by the music and dancing of his followers. Dionysian revelries continue to this day, in fact, many in the woods and deserts of North America every summer!

Jesus of Nazareth addresses androgyny as follows in *The Gospel of Thomas* (considered by some scholars to be the most accurate rendering of his actual teachings): “When you make the two into one, and when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner, and the upper like the lower, and

when you make male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be male nor the female be female... then you will enter [the kingdom].”

The Gnostic Saint, Sir Richard Payne Knight, subscribed to a metaphysical system based upon emanation, with a Supreme God representing “a Quintessential, Male-Female Principle, embodying the principles of creation, destruction, and renovation... all living beings [exist] as a result of the invigoration of the Universal Matter by the Divine Essence [both emanating from the androgynous Supreme God as male and female principles]” - as stated in *Red Flame #2*.

“Male-female, quintessential, one, man-being veiled in woman-form” - from Liber XV, the Gnostic Mass.

Carl Jung was heavily influenced by alchemical thought, and he believed that men and women carry archetypes of their opposites within (the animus and the anima), and have a responsibility to understand and develop both sides of their nature as part of the integration of the conscious and unconscious minds in achieving psychological and spiritual wholeness. According to British scholar Eleanor O'Kell, “Androgyny for Jung is an archetype of the collective unconsciousness, and he considers that the human psyche itself is androgynous; Jung laments the split in consciousness and polarity in the modern mind whereby we have lost a sense of wholeness.”

The Gnostic philosopher and biblical scholar, Harold Bloom, in his excellent book *Omens of the Millennium*, discussed the state of humanity after “the catastrophe of the Creation-Fall” thusly: “In relation to the original Man... our cosmos is a deformed copy, and so are we. We cannot join opposites, unlike the Androgyne, who is Anthropos, and is at once man and woman, our forefather and our foremother, the root of the tree of our existence. As

many contemporary feminists are well aware, the god of the Gnostics long ago voided the absurdity so difficult to remove from Judaism, Christianity and Islam: The exclusively male Godhead.”

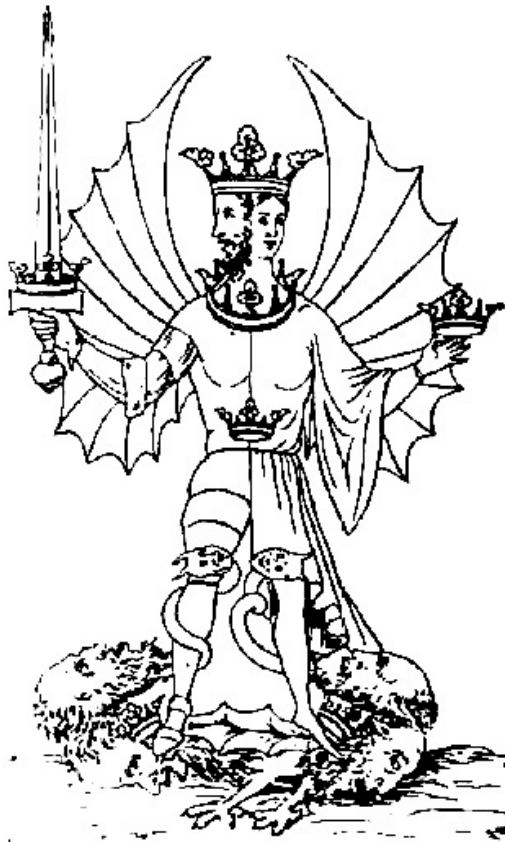
One of the more interesting and enjoyable parts of my work in social services was attending a yearly conference called “Saying it Out Loud” that both celebrated and dealt with Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender challenges (GLBT for short, as many of us know). I define myself as none of the above, but these conferences were valuable to me because they focused on identity. Discovering and nurturing our own individual identities is a necessary element in fully achieving one’s humanity, and a part of the great work I believe; finding and living according to one’s True Will.

“Who am I? What gender characteristics, active and latent, are at work within me? What about sexuality – what are my preferences and how do they affect my relationships with others? What sorts of boundaries do I erect and observe, and how do they foster, protect, or limit my healthy growth as a human? It is now a well-accepted psychological precept that sexuality and gender are not absolute states of being, but rather fall along ‘sliding scales,’ if you would – somewhat different for each person – where does my individual composition place me?”

These kinds of questions and topics are discussed at the “Saying It Out Loud” conferences in a thoughtful and direct way that was different from any group activity I had ever participated in; and I found the experience refreshing, and at times enlightening. Many of the conference participants had much more complicated journeys to adulthood than I, and had thought more deeply and worked more intensely with questions of personal identity

and their effect upon relationships with others than I had done as an adolescent. Marsha Botzer, founder of the Ingersoll Gender Center here in Seattle and an internationally-known spokesperson for the transgender community, was a particularly engaging presenter, and I had the pleasure of talking with her several times over the years. Her views and comments on identity, and the story of her personal journey had a universality that resonated with me (and quite obviously with nearly everyone else in attendance, whether G, L, B, T or Hetero), and brought the Androgyne to mind (as an extension of the alchemical concept of a unified being who combined the views and life experiences of male and female together in one identity). The Ingersoll Center website (www.ingersollcenter.com) welcomes browsers, and contains a wealth of information, thoughts and personal views. When it comes to radical self-determination, I believe the personal journeys of many transgendered people can shed light for us all.

The greater acceptance and subsequent visibility of diversity in gender preference and sexual activity over the last century has had a great impact on western arts and culture. Androgynous entertainers like Mick Jagger, David Bowie, Eddie Izzard, Ellen DeGeneres, K.D. Laing and Melissa Etheridge have found wide acceptance in most areas of our society, and pushed the envelope of acceptable dress and behavior for the rest of us, should we choose to step out from the crowd. I watched a recently released DVD of a 1972 Rolling Stones concert, and I was struck again by the sexual power and appeal of Mick Jagger as the Androgyne. Seeing him perform live at the Grammys show a few weeks later, I saw him as a skinny little old Androgyne, yes, but



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MOVIE REVIEW: AGORA BY DELILAH

ON MY WAY to my Hawaii retreat last January, I read a magazine article that a new movie was coming out about Hypatia. How exciting; I couldn't wait! I love movies that take me back to ancient times and especially Ancient Egypt.

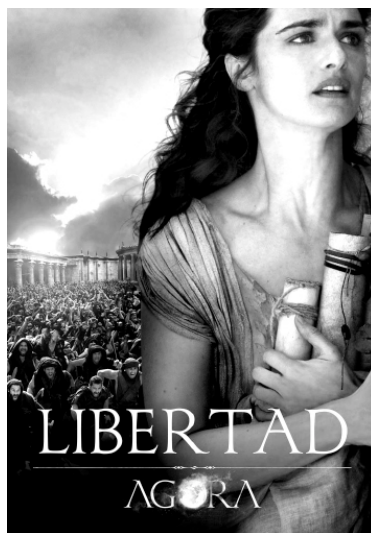
Those interested in woman's studies would, I hope, know Hypatia (370-415 AD). She was a Greek Philosopher, Astronomer and Mathematician from Alexandria, Egypt, who was famous for her eloquence and education. She was a teacher and advisor to many important Egyptians, Roman Pagans, Christians and Jews alike. The story that follows her through history is how she was brutally murdered by a rabid mob of Christians incited by Cyril, the Bishop of Alexandria. The story tells how she was seized by the mob while riding in her chariot, stripped naked, skinned alive by scraping the flesh from her bones with oyster shells, and then set afire. Yikes! What did she do? She was said to create religious turmoil by logic and scientific reasoning. (Sound familiar?)

My inspiration for belly dance as a teenager was really motivated by old biblical-era movies like "Cleopatra", "The Egyptian", "Samson and Delilah", and "The Robe..." The costumes and atmosphere of these Hollywood spectacles completely captivated my imagination. The name of this movie, "Agora," is the Greek word for the meeting place in the center of a city. This movie is full of metaphorical meeting places: science and astronomy, religions, the flow of human history, tragedy and loss. I think more people would have seen the movie upon its release had it been called "Hypatia" and, although the movie did very well in other countries, it had trouble finding distribution here because of its depiction of Christianity – however accurate it was.

The good news is that it is now available on DVD and Netflix!

The movie is set in Hypatia's lifetime, many years after Jesus and during the dramatic rise of Christianity as the new state religion of Rome fol-

lowing the reign of Constantine (272 to 337 c.e.). This period of rapid change caused complex tensions across the Roman Empire, which included Egypt. Many historical accounts describe Alexandria as a center of colliding thought, and as a volatile place. The city was originally founded by Alexander the Great and established as a place of learning. The great library of Alexandria was burned by Julius Caesar (who claimed it was an accident) long before Hypatia's time. The library depicted in the movie is the "daughter library" in the temple of Serapis. It too was destroyed in 391CE by order of then-Bishop Theophilus, a grim portent of things to come for Hypatia.



The movie was made by a Spanish film company with English speaking actors, and was directed by the Chilean, Alejandro Amenabar. Rachel Weisz stars as Hypatia. The movie was made with limited and unusually subtle computer-generated imagery. Many

of the sets were hand-built (much like the making of HBO's "Rome") and installed on the island of Malta. It is a relatively low-budget film (50 million dollars), but viewing each scene is like stepping into an Orientalist painting. The lighting is especially heavenly. Everyone was obviously committed to this project; they did a great job.

The film takes us up to aerial views of the Arabian Peninsula and drops us down into the time and place of Alexandria, Egypt 391c.e., and I loved this. For centuries Alexandria represented a beacon of light that brought people from all civilized lands to a center of knowledge and a pivotal point of historic change. The clash here was between the fading past glory of classical civilization and intellectual thought that Alexandria (and Hypatia) represented, and the coming of a new faith and allegiance

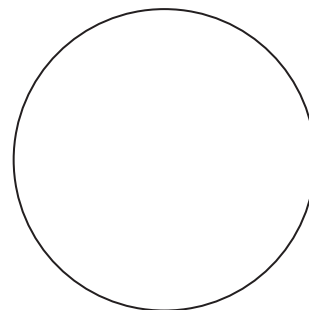
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to the One God. The period of her life was the end of a time and place where women like Hypatia and Cleopatra could be independent rulers, philosophers, mathematicians, and scholars, and it was the beginning of a long onslaught on women's rights; women would occupy a very subordinate role in human history for centuries to come.

Questioning is what Hypatia symbolizes in this movie. Dare we question? The director tells a story of early Christians as more human and fallible than divine, themselves capable of fanaticism and persecution. Hypatia represents rational thought and the methods of science. A love of science moves me in the same way as belly dance does. It was Hypatia's unquenchable passion to investigate, to know, which she chose to explore beyond love and family. She represented, and continues to represent extended options for women. She remains an inspiration.

The DVD extras about the making of this movie are also deeply moving. It was created by a team of talented visionaries who obviously fell in love with Hypatia. Rachel Weisz plays her well. When it comes to the herstoric record, Hypatia deserves more meat on her bones. This movie is a tribute to her.

DELILAH is a world famous belly dancer, choreographer, teacher, writer, and priestess with a special connection to Hathor, goddess of music, dance and joy. Every year Delilah leads a giant troupe of dancers, musicians and banner carriers in Seattle's Fremont Solstice Parade, in a dazzling, thundering display of precision dance and gorgeous costuming! www.visionarydance.com.



CHASTE MOON

Early spring stretching a star dust horizon.

My ongoing vigil, your hopeful arising.

Still and alone, reflecting your grace;

connection, interdependence,

love's sweet resurgence.

Halve my heart, soft kiss my whole soul,

perfect bliss, hold me, unfold.

Your silver ribbon slipping uncoiling

open heart electric, synchronous timing.

Joy transmitted, death transmuted

Laughter birthed magick, concentric communion.

Caught you once and then again

dreaming of us and so it begins.

No race, no rush, the look on your face,

the way you move, the way I chase.

- JASMINE SELENE

HORIZON CALENDAR

The Official Agenda of Horizon Oasis O.T.O.

April 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1 Offsite: Enochian Group Ritual - 8pm - rsvp: asicath@ keepsilence.org	2 EGC Ceremonial Gnostic Mass 6-8pm
3 Offsite: Study Group 5PM Magic in Theory & Practice <u>mkolson@ attglobal.net</u> for details	4	5 IV° Prep. Study Group 3rd Degree Only 7pm-9pm	6 Making Ritual Robes and Tabards with Sr. Cristin 7pm - 9pm	7	8 First Day of the Writing of the Book of the Law Celebration Ritual: The Abomination of Desolation Doors open at 7:30, Ritual at 8pm	9 Liber XV The Gnostic Mass, 6PM And at 7:30PM: Second Day of the Writing of the Book of the Law Celebration!
10 3rd Day of the Writing of the Bok of the Law Celebration and Salon - bring things to read, perform or make music! 6pm	11	12	13	14	15 <u>Offsite: Daughters of Lilith: A monthly women- only gathering 7pm</u> matertiamat@ gmail.com for details	16
17	18	19	20	21 Monthly Oasis Meeting: First Degree + business meeting 7pm-9pm	22 QBL Discussion Group 7pm to 9pm Facilitated by Br. David P.	23
24 Liber XV The Gnostic Mass 6PM to 7:30pm All are welcome!	25	26	27 Degree Rehearsal	28	29 Degree Rehearsal	30 Second Degree Initiations 1pm to 3pm (Tyled to 2nd degree)

Key: Public Events / **Private Events** / *Outside Events (not hosted by OTO)*

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