

Review: “The Hermetic Marriage,” Pentameters Theatre, 22nd March 2014



The Butterfly Wheel

Hermeticism. Tarot. Kate Bush. Tarot. With these four words of power I was evoked to visible appearance in Hampstead, north London, to view a performance of “The Hermetic Marriage.” This was a music / dance piece created by The Butterfly Wheel, and staged at [Pentameters Theatre](#). This, incidentally, is a tiny venue, with capacity for only sixty in the audience, mainly known for poetry and fringe theatre. The venue-owner told me afterwards that this was the first time she had taken a chance on a piece like this – but her gamble had obviously paid off, as the production had sold out every night of its three-week run.

This being more an immersive art experience rather than just a simple performance, I shall describe my experiences subjectively...

As I entered the auditorium, I heard the delightfully named Alice Ancient and Moon Child vamping ambient textures with synth and haunting vocals. These two ladies were positioned – with their band – stage right, dressed as high priestesses for the rite which was to follow.



Solomonic Seal

The place was daubed with occultish symbols, whilst on the floor of the central performance area was the Seal of Mercury from the [Key of Solomon](#). (Hmm! This is the [second time](#) an artist has used the *Key of Solomon* to conjure me to appearance!) I took my place in the audience at the back on one of the wooden chairs used instead of conventional theatrical seats.

A young man came up to me with a tray of lucky charms and asked me to pick one. I did so at random: he told me I had picked the Hand of Fatima, which wards off all evil spirits. “Oh, cheers!” I said. I tried licking it but it had no discernible effect.

As Jim Morrison was wont to say, “*Is everybody in? Let the ceremony begin!*” First came an invocation of Sophia – the four dancers, two male and two female, portraying Her plight as she is forced to surrender her baby to the corruption of the material universe. Meanwhile, behind everyone a rapid succession of images projected onto the back wall: pre-filmed sequences alternating with a multiplicity of symbols – satanic – masonic – alchemical – rosierean and more.

Throughout the evening’s performance, the dancers played the parts of the Philosophical King and Queen; of Cernunnos; of angels and devils fighting for the souls of mortal lovers, and ultimately the Sun and Moon themselves. Meanwhile, six musicians in total – the Butterfly Wheel and their accompanists, and two others who appeared for a sequence set in [Hell upon Earth](#) – played compositions which bore the influence of the aforementioned Kate Bush crossed with Patti Smith, Jim Morrison during his more poetic meanderings, Irish folk, blues and country.

At its conclusion, I figured from audience remarks saying “Ooh! There were a load of ideas to consider,” that they were all clearly bamboozled. Clearly however, the whole thing was a sophisticated and highly unconventional magical operation – the overall theme of which was to manifest the Hermetic Marriage in actuality, and raise the consciousness of the Earth thereby.

Unfortunately, the current run at the Pentameters Theatre has now ended: however the Butterfly Wheel will be taking their show to the [Berlin Psychedelic Festival](#) next month.

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