

## John Zorn – The Goddess (Music For The Ancient Of Days) [2010]

Written by bluesever

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1. *Enchantress* (7:44)
2. *Ishtar* (5:36)
3. *Heptameron* (5:18)
4. *White Magick* (6:37)
5. *Drawing Down the Moon* (5:49)
6. *Beyond the Infinite* (11:51)
7. *Ode to Delphi* (4:43)

### Personnel:

Marc Ribot (guitar);  
Carol Emanuel (harp);  
Rob Burger (piano);  
Ben Perowsky (drums);  
John Zorn (arranger).

John Zorn's interest in mysticism has shown itself in many different ways over the last two decades, but has become even more pronounced in the last couple of years. For instance, *Goddess: Music for the Ancient of Days* can be seen as a companion piece to *In Search of the Miraculous*, issued in February 2010. Both recordings share most of the same musicians: Rob Burger (piano), Ben Perowsky (drums), Kenny Wollesen (vibes), and Carol Emmanuel (harp). Trevor Dunn and Marc Ribot round out the cast on upright bass and guitar, respectively. Emmanuel's harp plays a central role in these proceedings -- more so than on its predecessor. Since this set celebrates "women in myth, magick and ritual throughout the Ages," and the aural evidence is in each of the album's seven titles, this only makes sense. While the entire ensemble executes Zorn's otherworldly, melodic, and cyclical compositions, it is Emmanuel's harp that is the guiding and anchoring force in each of them. The opening track, "Enchantress," uses a close thematic variation of "Sacred Dance" from *In Search of the Miraculous*; its dynamic and textures are different, but there is only a single note that denotes one theme from the other.

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Ribot's guitar plays an interesting role on this album, especially on tracks such as "White Magick," where along with the circular theme and a gradually layered and building sense of dynamic and tension, his instrument plays on the outer ring, where the chaotic element is at work in all ritualistic practice and the unexpected can happen and usually does. "Drawing Down the Moon" is perhaps the most singular cut. Written as if it were a song, it features lovely interplay between Burger and Emmanuel, with Emmanuel embellishing the melody with a surf-like reverb on his guitar. "Beyond the Infinite," the longest composition here, is also the knottiest. But it never leaves its harmonic balance in the lurch. Dunn's bass plays an important role in extending its melodic reach as Emmanuel's harp and Burger's piano play through a series of shifting, interlocking rhythmic and lyric patterns, and Wollesen's vibes solo is a stunner. This mystic celebration of the feminine is, like its previously released cousin, another of Zorn's more ambitious -- yet deliberate -- attempts at writing adventurous music that is at once accessible and arresting in its beauty. ---Thom Jurek, Rovi

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