

by Nierika co-founder of the
Temple of the Serpent and Drum
Petone.

Blue Moon 1999 Presents:

An Evening of Esoteric Voodoo

Nierika (H.O.T.C.C.)

Month of JANUARY
Day of SATURN, Moon in CAPRICORN

What words can one use to describe the events that unfolded on the occasion that the Hounfor Du Marché and the Hounfor of the Emerald Coils joined forces for an evening of Voodoo Magick?

Surprising. Astonishing. Intense, at times verging on terrifying. Ecstatic, joyful, wild, exhausting! Yes, all of these words are apt.

A moon has passed since that night of wonder. It has taken this long for the experience to assimilate and make some sense (if one can or even should attempt to 'make sense' of the wonder and intensely powerful mystery that is Voodoo!)

About thirty souls joined in the ritual that evening. The temple was a sight to behold. Tonight, Oya – the mighty mother of storms, dancer on life's edge, Matron of the Hounfor Du Marché – was to be called. Also to be called was Damballah La Flambeau, the mighty Fire Serpent of Voodoo, Patron of the Hounfor of the Emerald Coils.

All those present that evening can bear witness to the events that unfolded.

Sacrament was shared, and so we began. Members of the temple called

the Mighty Oya to earth. Symbols sacred to her were alive in the eerie half-light of dusk: her headstone; eggplants; sword; her banner emblazoned with lightening bolt.

A handful of voodooists chose to take on the mantle of this dread Loa. As each came forward, Mambo, Houngan and Hounsis lifted the elaborate costume of the Egangan dancers over the voodooist. Standing now over seven feet tall and moving slowly, invoking with ritual steps and rattles, aided by the drummers and voodooists whose voices were lifted to the heavens, calling Oya by her praise names, the dancer began to spin.

Faster and faster they spun, layer upon layer of colourful torn strips of cloth made up the body, head hidden by beaded mask. A vision of swirling colour!

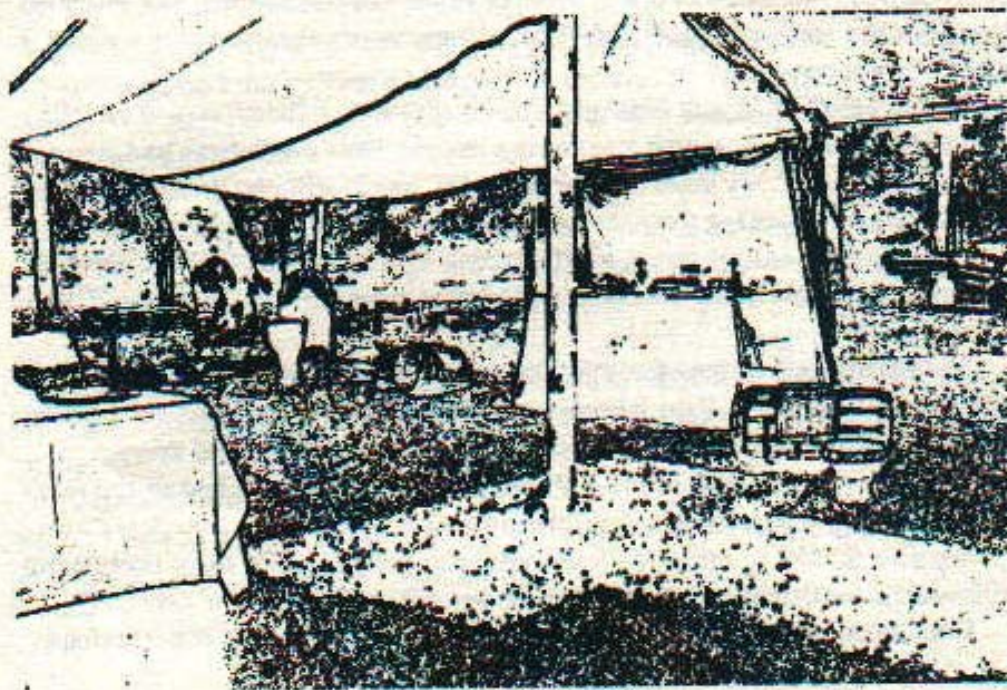
Oya moved through the Hounfor, her name on all lips. As her name was called the night sky was rent with lightning and thunder. Oya, Mother of

Storms, come dance! The dancer now span wildly out of control – Oya had entered! Dancing with deity, Oh Mother have mercy!

As the dancer momentarily lost consciousness and began to topple, many loving and strong arms reached out to steady and support, then led the voodooist to the side to rest.

Another flash of lightning! All now turned to Damballah's beautiful altar and banner emblazoned with the serpent, all in red. Hot chilli peppers to tempt him. Come Fire Serpent, Come!

The Snake dancers, with blackened faces, and hands patterned with white now came to prominence. Bodies flowing in graceful movements, singing the names of praise.



The Voodoo Temple

Spirit Chief, drummers and voodooists invoking this ancient and mighty Loa with sacred symbols, song and dance. Now a voodooist invited possession, looking deep into the sacred mirror of Voodoo held before them as they knelt before Damballah's Veve. Eyes not recognising the image held on the mirror's surface. All present formed a circle around the dancer, all of one will, to call forth the great serpent! Bodies swaying, flowing, voices chanting. Come dance with us Damballah! Rattles hissed in unison as the serpent struck!

Now faces lit up with rapture as they were joined with the snake, then were stunned as Damballah left, to dance with another.

Voodooists danced up storms and snakes – the sky opened. Voodooists danced

in water as it rushed through the spirit house, the sacred drummers didn't miss a beat as blood and rain bounced off the drum heads!

Lightening illuminated the now ravaged temple, and appeared as the flash of a camera to capture isolated scenes. Our heads were opened by the ritual and the Loa.

Dancing on the edge of Magick, beyond exhaustion, on and on, with the fury of the storm raging around us. Falling through the mirror of Voodoo, now dancing in the arms of Oya, now wrapped in coils of splendour!

My own consciousness began to move away. It stretched out in all directions, thinner and thinner. 'I' was dissipating, like a mist. No longer able to distinguish between the sound of drum, voice or rattle, but surrounded, nay, engulfed by a powerful rhythmic throbbing. A blind came down slowly over my vision, I was thrown to my knees.

As the blind lifted and crashing sounds returned, I found myself kneeling next to the centre pole (spirit tree) of the temple. How much time had passed? Seconds? Minutes? My arms hung at my sides, hands still clutching the rattles, lips still silently forming the name, Damballah, Damballah, Damballah.

Another flash of lightening, another scene. Spirit Chiefs, Mambos, Hounsis, La Place, and a few hardy voodooists still left standing, giving thanks and closing the Hounfor.

The ecstasy and sublime forgetfulness of Voodoo was apparent on many faces that night. By morning light it appeared that the temple itself had indeed been the centre of a storm. All in wild disarray, all toppled and washed away.

Visible on the ground, running through the temple was etched in the earth the unmistakable imprint of an undulating snake.

We give thanks to those fearless souls who joined us, for their energy and enthusiastic participation, and their generous gifts of food for the poor.

Until again we dance the sacred dance, until again we meet at the crossroads!



by Soror Nierika

Sr Nierika was a co-founder of the 'Temple of the Serpent and Drum' [Petone] originally known as the Temple of Baphotmer. Many of the articles of within the Senatorius Sacerdos Harpyiae are from the esoteric corpus of the Temple of the Serpent & Drum.

Likewise the Temple of the Serpent and Drum had a close association with the 'Red and Black Temple' [Dunedin] under Mike F. Hierophant.

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