
FORBIDDEN
ORACLES
ELIJAH DANIEL SMITH
+NOIS QUARTET
SŌ PERCUSSION

ELIJAH DANIEL SMITH - Composer

~NOIS QUARTET

Julian Velasco - Soprano Saxophone

Joseph Connor - Alto Saxophone

Jordan Lulloff - Tenor Saxophone

János Csontos - Baritone Saxophone

SŌ PERCUSSION

Eric Cha-Beach

Josh Quillen

Adam Sliwinski

Jason Treuting

Mike Tierney - Engineer

Matthew Parrish - Additional Tracking

Kevin Kennedy Ryan II - Album Art

Forbidden Oracles is inspired by a miniature codex that contains 37 oracles, entitled The Gospel of the Lots of Mary according to its incipit. These oracles would be chosen via lot divination so as to provide the petitioner with a response to a question. In the case of this particular text, it is unclear exactly how the oracular number was determined. Fragments of this text and others quite similar to it have also been found at the shrine of St. Colluthus at Antinoe, the shrine of St. Philoxenus at Oxyrhynchus, and the Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit. Scholars (Luijendijk and Klingshirn 2019) suggest that the oraclemonger likely offered oracular responses to those seeking help during pilgrimages or festivals. Though not religious myself, I have long been enamored with theology and the history of religion.

These oracles immediately fascinated me because of how much they differ in tone from modern day horoscopes. Whereas horoscopes today are equally vague and applicable to as many situations as possible, they are often much more optimistic and gentle in their language. These oracles are remarkably dark and predict pain, suffering, doom, and hardship in a way that would be shocking to contemporary readers. While I won't try to make any qualitative statements about why that may be, the nature of these oracles struck me as remarkably inspiring for dark and unsettling music. For this piece, I have chosen 5 oracles that I feel work well together for the purposes of this piece.

THE ORACLES

I - O human, with their tongues they love you greatly, but their heart is far from you. And you know what happened to you before today, that you almost lost your life. In any case they certainly lie in wait for you.

II - Be happy, rejoice, be glad and glorify God for what has happened to you. Because it was only a little while ago that you were far from home, then you suffered loss and were in disgrace and danger. But God took pity on you.

III - Behold, you have been saved, do not turn to commit sin, so that even worse matters do not happen to you. Do you not remember what has happened to you before today? And God saved you from everything. Do not return to this matter.

IV - It is you alone who brings upon yourself a great, difficult burden. This matter that you want to do, its time has not yet come. Endure a little longer and you will see the confidence in God that will reach you.

V - They will trust you in this matter. Be brave and endure, for the time is hastening for you. Do not be distressed nor despair nor grieve, because you have a strong hope through God.

VI - The Lord God has heard your request and he will send his angel and he will walk before you. And you will see the confidence in God that will reach you. Only do not become careless, saying "this thing will not happen." Yes, it will happen.

VII - You know, O human, that you did your utmost again. You did not gain anything but loss, dispute, and war. But if you are a little patient, the matter will prosper through the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

VIII - Fight for yourself in what has happened to you, because it is a human evil. Your enemies are not far from you. They have plotted against you again due to the evil that is in their hearts. But trust in God and walk in his commandments forever.

THE ORACLES

IX - Get up and go immediately. Do not delay. For this is the moment that God appointed for you. They have simply accused you to the point of death, but be patient just a little.

X - The peace of God will be with you and you will be saved from the affliction that has come upon you. Fulfill what you promised, because God does not tempt anyone. It is you alone who are disobedient.

XI - If you decide to do this thing, do it. Do not be careless, because God established this. It is you alone who turns back. No – there is no evil that will reach you. Trust in God and do not be of two minds.

XII - Do not let go of the faith in your heart. You have God as a helper. He will guide you on the path on which you will go. At all events, do not doubt because nothing is impossible for God.

XIII - So, do not think about strength, O human. You will not be victorious now. You will endure great suffering because the difficult time has not yet passed you by. Do not trust the words of vain people.

XIV - They will trust you and you will be victorious in this matter. Strengthen your heart. This matter is from God. Fear not. As for you, in every thing that you do, God is with you.

XV - O human, bear everything and give thanks with a thought to God, because it is God's hand that was upon you. Do not doubt in your heart nor walk in the counsels of vain people.

XVI - Remember that you were close to death another time in the affliction that has come upon you, because you were in your former affairs, while your enemies counseled you and you thought they loved you. You will understand my words. Turn away from these people.

XVII - The peace of God will be with you in all your days. And you will rejoice and a large

THE ORACLES

harvest will be yours this year. And you will rejoice in the worlds of your hands, because the angel of the Lord will walk before you.

XVIII - It is the king of heaven and earth and the God of all flesh who fights for you all. He will make you conquer your enemies, for God has received your request about all difficulties that you endured. They are a concern for God.

XIX - This is a victory from God. But be patient and endure until the time comes and you receive the hope of your salvation. The crown is ready for you, but they oppose you. Do not be led astray by people.

XX - A little longer and you will receive the fulfillment of your life. For the Lord is your mediator. Endure, and you will receive the hope of your salvation, because the power of God is greater than that of humans. And they will marvel at you.

XXI - Behold, the difficult time passed for you. Behold, the hour of rest has come upon you. Simply be brave. You will see the confidence in God that will reach you. And he will send the angel of peace and will guide you and give you rest.

XXII - Just as another time, they beguile you. Do not let them finish robbing you, so that you die violently on account of your disobedience, because you were careless.

XXIII - I marvel at you, O human, since it is not in your power. You will be afflicted. Your hope left you another time. Without the fear of God, you would not be saved from the wrath that has come upon you.

XXIV - Stop being of two minds, O human, whether this thing will happen or not. Yes – it will happen! Be brave and do not be of two minds, because it will remain with you a long time and you will receive joy and happiness.

XXV - Go – make your vows. And what you promised, fulfill it immediately. Do not be of two minds, because God is merciful. It is

THE ORACLES

he who will bring about your request for you and do away with the affliction in your heart.

XXVI - Get up and help yourself, because the hour of necessity has come. Why are you sitting down? They will summon you without your knowledge. Do not think that you will avoid the danger that is upon you. But go and pray to God immediately.

XXVII - Trust in the help of the Most High, and call upon his name with your whole heart. And he will send his good angel and will lead you. Do not fear those who will kill your bodies without having more than this to do to you all.

XXVIII - Be brave in every thing, because your concern is over nothing. The Lord will help you with his right hand. He will send Michael, his angel, and will help you. And you will conquer those who fight with you, and he will humble your enemies before you.

XXIX - Go away quickly! Do not stop to reflect "What have I done? These things have caught up to me." But be patient for a little while until God solves the matter. Only believe in God with all your heart, and you will see what will happen in the end.

XXX - No evil will reach you in this affair, nor sorrow nor harm, because the Lord Jesus fights on your behalf. You will find joy and be happy even in your short lifespan. Trust in God and do not be of two minds.

XXXI - Walk and go immediately! Do not delay. Because it is God who fights for you. He will cause your enemies to be subject to you. If you are patient for a little while, you will receive the hope of your salvation and will be at rest.

XXXII - Look! Hurry because the time has come, your heart will be happy. Go forward because the matter is appointed

THE ORACLES

for you by God. He will prepare for you a good path, and you will be saved from the affliction that has come upon you.

XXXIII - Do not follow your heart's desire nor pursue fulfillment. Do not trust the words of people, because you did everything in your power another time without being able to secure the matter. But it is you alone who turns back.

XXXIV - Go forward immediately! This is a thing from God. Look! You know that for many days you are suffering greatly. But it is of no concern to you, because you have come to the haven of victory.

XXXV - You will not be able to believe them, nor will you be able to have confidence in their speech. These people are deceivers and traitors. Turn away from them, because they beguiled you another time with other people.

XXXVI - O human, look! What did you do? Examine yourself alone. For truly, a great transgression is in you. It isn't in your power to oppose the hand of God, is it? But go and glorify God.

XXXVII - This is the day that God has prepared that peace and joy be in it. Because Christ Jesus will give you a good harvest and a prosperous life.

FORBIDDEN ORACLES

1. I. O HUMAN - 4:36`
2. II. HUMAN EVIL - 4:17
3. III. THE WORDS OF VAIN PEOPLE - 9:08
4. IV. THEY BEGUILE YOU - 6:23
5. V. DO NOT FOLLOW YOUR HEART'S DESIRES - 8:06

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6. PERIHELION - 12:16

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