

**JUDITH SHATIN: Time to Burn (Innova Recordings, 2014)
Reviewed in Terapija (terapija.net)**

Judith Shatin is a great role model and inspiration for Mary Kathleen Ernst, who you have had the chance to meet through the recently released album "Keeping Time," and therefore, besides music and a general creative reach, it is very interesting to observe how the teacher is more nimble than her student, although they spent some time together in Juilliard School. Also, after many years, they jointly made a much acclaimed album "Tower of the Eight Winds" (2010), and renewed cooperation on the aforementioned album in which Kathleen remade several of Shatin's compositions.

Just to refresh our memories and renew our knowledge: Mary Kathleen is a pianist. Judith is a very versatile artist with a rich discography behind her, and she has covered many musical genres - classical and abstract, even experimental in the domain of modern classical music, as evidenced by her numerous awards. Moreover, from the years 1989 to 1993 she was the President of the Association of American Women Composers. The scope of her genre is very wide: using computer electronic and acoustic music, constantly cooperating and making various collaborations with various soloists and ensembles, with a main focus on instrumental performances.

Here, on her third album for Innova Recording, through almost 80 minutes of music, she presents a trans-genre scenario of acoustic and electronic music, dividing compositions into separate sessions of acoustics and electronics, with just a few of them arranged as a combination of both expressions. She seems very peaceful and calm, focusing on improvisation of accompanying musicians (solo viola, string quartet, piano, percussion, drums, oboe, clarinet ...) with her own inspirations of electronic enterprises, using the imagination of real instruments produced by computer programs. In other words, why bother playing some conventional instruments when they can be adapted to chords and notations in a binary system?

This whole collection of different things which alludes to "live" music undisputedly associated with electro-acoustical achievements from half a century ago (or even longer) is impregnated with exhibitions in which there is no virtuous legalities of the "classics": it focuses on melody, rhythm and harmony. We are talking about these factors in the traditional sense, but in her music, all of this exists on a completely different level - where a skilful skill of improvisation comes to its full expression. The first four mutually interrelated themes: Glyph - I. Luminous, Glyph - II. Flickering, Glyph - III. Ecstatic, and Glyph - IV. Incandescent, played by violist James Durham, pianist Margaret Kampmeier and the Cassat String Quartet, are differently painted pieces with constant changes of stylish performances in clean formats, and then, in the main one called "Time to Burn" a picturesque sifting and screening of I-Jen Fang percussion follows in oddly staged games of the oboist Aaron Hill, also continuing in the dark "Grito del

Corazon" inspired by Goya's "Black Paintings," where an electronic drone background has been used as well.

In "Sic Transit," she plays again with I-Jen Fang percussion, including this time computer-controlled instruments, while strangely named "Hoshech al p'ney HaTeh" is a real electronic mini-symphony with psycho-drone attributes about the birth of the world, the creation of a relationship between dark and light, and the exit out of chaos and the beginning of life. The last piece - "Elijah's Chariot"- screams for a full 20 minutes with combinations of the amplified Cassatt String Quartet and electronic processors, suggestive of fiery combustions of the mythical fiery chariots of Elijah and thundering rides on the heavens.

Just saying that the whole material affects us as simply steady and balanced would be too little. Here we have Judith presenting herself, again, as a versatile artist who manages to connect alongside both traditions and conventions with current underground stylizations of electronics, absorbing essences and important items from both sound worlds. She is clearly focused on themes and plots, she allows games and improvisations, and she creates chaos and unravels it in very calm layers of elevations, but then again swirls all of them with excitement and ecstasy.

She is playing within her own control and permits a lot to an enjoyable series of different stylistic flourishes, which only sometimes and periodically repeat.

Her horizons and spectrums are very rich and impressive, and after you finish listening to the last, a very interesting and dramatic theme of "Elijah chariot" (with shorter "dumb" vocal arias!), the whole impression irresistibly compels you to press the replay key.

Headlines:

1. Glyph - I. Luminous
2. Glyph - II. Flickering
3. Glyph - III. Ecstatic
4. Glyph - IV. Incandescent
5. Time to burn
6. Grito Del Corazon
7. Sic transit
8. Hoshech al p'ney HaTeh
9. Elijah's chariot

Album Rating [1-10]: 8