

SHATIN *Glyph* 1. *Time to Burn* 2. *Grito del Corazón* 3. *Sic Transit* 4. *Hoshech Al P'ney HaTehom* 5. *Elijah's Chariot* 6 • James Dunham (va), Margaret Kampmeier (pn); Aaron Hill (ob); I-Jen Fang, Mike Schutz (percs); F. Gerard Errante, D. Gause (cl); 1, Cassatt Str Qrt • INNOVA 845 (75:08)

Over the course of a mere 75 minutes, this disc introduces the listener to the sheer depth and variety of Judith Shatin's music. The above interview speaks much about interdisciplinary modes of inspiration and the use of either obscure instruments (shofar) or technology (electronics, CADI). It is interesting to note that the first piece, *Glyph* (1984, for solo viola, string quartet, and piano), begins in rather welcoming fashion. This movement is marked "Luminous" (the others are "Flickering," "Ecstatic" and "Incandescent"). The playing here by soloist James Dunham is stunning: resonant and vital. The first movement invokes large open spaces (of time, possibly, as well as space); the more spiky "Flickering" offers excellent contrast and is superbly performed, especially in the virtuosity of the speedy pizzicatos. The ecstasy of the third movement is quite reverent in nature; the virtuosity of the beautifully, skillfully written finale is most satisfying.

The piece from which the disc takes its name, *Time to Burn* (2006), is far more overtly Modernist. Scored for oboe and two percussionists, it is a visceral reaction to world events, including holocausts and racism. The title refers back to the burnings of witches. The oboe part presents huge challenges (including multiphonics), magnificently overcome here by Aaron Hill, while the percussion element provides a terrifically exciting sense of momentum.

The Goya-inspired *Grito del Corazón* (2001) for two clarinets and electronics is far more than atmospheric. Again, there is a clear narrative thread that moves us through the piece's five-minute duration. *Sic Transit* (2011) is the piece for percussionist and CADI (it is worth searching out the video mentioned in the interview above, also, just to see how it all comes together). Here, I-Jen Fang is the intrepid percussionist. As a critic who sometimes feels he has been exposed to too much percussion only music in his time (and who has tended to relegate these pieces and discs to a space of interest only really open to percussionists), it is quite something to say that this piece grips throughout. The 1990 piece *Hoshech Al P'ney HaTehom* (1990, "Darkness upon the face of the deep"), for electronics, musically depicts the birth of a world. As Shatin points out above, it is not quite Wagnerian in that there are depictions also of lightning; but the link seems to remain, for this listener at least.

The ancient sounds of the shofar make the final piece, the 20-minute *Elijah's Chariot* of 1995, a most stimulating experience. The sudden juxtaposition of the shofar's primal sound and that of string quartet (which, some would claim, is the very embodiment of civilization itself) is marked. This is the longest piece on the disc and demonstrates clearly how Shatin's feel for narrative can sustain longer timescales. The performance is magnificent, exuding confidence at every turn. **Colin Clarke**