The Hissing of Summer Storms

*The Sky Torn Apart*, Paul Schütze (Glacial Movements)

I'm not sure if the music on this new CD is apocalyptic or redemptive. The press release offers us poetry ('The sky tore apart and the sun curdled like a diseased eye' is how it begins) and tells us the music is 'a reflection on the uncanny parallels found in our anthropogenic environmental transformation and the Nordic myths of Ragnarök' which doesn't really help, though it goes on to talk of 'the earth subsumed by water as a consequence of divine conflict' and notes the possibility of a reborn world eventually emerging from those waters.

Divine conflict and Nordic myths aside, *The Sky Torn Apart* is another wonderful piece of sound art, dense ambient music, from artist, photographer, perfumier and musician Paul Schütze. Over the last few decades Schütze has moved from the improvisational band Laughing Hands to collaborative jazz-rock outings with the likes of Bill Laswell and Jon Hassell (often assembled on computer) to a series of sonic explorations of specific archaeological sites and future/futurist scenarios. A previous CD cover has water pouring through a flooded Manhattan around the Empire State Building: perhaps this new music is a revisitation of this (implied) narrative?

Joined by Clive Bell on 'Mutant Shakuhachi' (!), this music sputters and hisses and fizzes over massive blocks of drone and sustained keyboards. It is like watching clouds or icebergs move: glacial movements is exactly right. For nearly an hour this music immerses the listener in storms and weather, enveloping them with slow changes of mood, sound and temperature. Moments of calm arrive, and are then swept away. Clicks and clusters of unclassifiable, unknown sounds – perhaps field recordings, circle around wind and distant plodding rhythms in the distance as scrapes and echoes fill the listening space.

Listening to this feels like a journey, and the more one pays attention the more one hears. This is careful, intelligent, moving music: dissonant, calming, stormy and engaging. Sculpture for the ears.

 Rupert Loydell

More information here: http://www.paulschutze.com/

and here: http://www.glacialmovements.com/music-news/paul-schuetze-the-sky-torn