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## ShadowBang

Evan Ziporyn with I Wayan Wija | Cantaloupe Music



**Track Listing:** Head 1; Head 2/Scene 1; Angkat; Ocean; Meditasi/Pesta Raksasa; Frogs; Forest/Tari Subali/Quiet Battle/Loud Battle/Priest's Curse; Tabuh Gari

**Personnel:** I Wayan Wija (vocals, dialogue) with the Bang on a Can All-Stars: < Robert Black (bass), Eduardo Leandro (percussion), Lisa Moore (keyboard), Mark Stewart (guitar), Wendy Sutter (cello), Evan Ziporyn (soprano saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet, composer)

Like Bill Frisell's soundtracks to the films of Buster Keaton, the best scores can both enhance the visual experience and stand on their own as worthy pieces in their own right. Composer/reedman Evan Ziporyn, long interested in Balinese traditions including Gamelan music, collaborated to create the soundtrack to a theatre piece that combined aspects of Balinese traditional shadow puppetry, *wayang*, with more western stage design and music. The result, *ShadowBang*, distills the musical content of the performance, trimming out any segments that relied purely on dialogue or visuals to be understood, into a one-hour recording that includes enough of the dialogue, courtesy of I Wayan Wija, to create a remarkably visual listening experience that compels and captivates at every turn.

There's no question that Ziporyn's music, performed by the Bang on a Can All-Stars, is rooted in western harmonies and musical constructs, although there are clear elements of Gamelan in the programme, in particular the ambient "Ocean." But with Bang on a Can's more conventional line-up of reeds, guitar, keyboard, bass, percussion and cello, the occidental is at least as prevalent. Odd meters abound, close harmonies and dissonances more associated with new music, as well as rhythmic constructs that bring to mind minimalists like Steve Reich and, in particular, Phillip Glass in his use of shifting meters based on straight quarter notes alternating with quarter note triplets.

Wija's dialogue helps make *ShadowBang* a complete experience, acting out a variety of Balinese characters who speak in everyday English, as opposed to the gods and heroes of Hindu mythology who speak in a stylized Kawi language. The music shifts from the oddly-metered yet somehow pastoral setting of "Tabuh Gari" to the more

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insistently rhythmic “Head 1.” Through it all, with a relatively spare number of conventional instruments that still cover a broad range of textures, Ziporyn builds a continuous piece that, quite literally, tells its own story without the benefit of either explanation or visual aid. While there are moments of abstraction, the majority of *ShadowBang* is quite lyrical, with Wendy Sutter's cello and Ziporyn's clarinet creating a rich almost renaissance ambience at the beginning of “Forest/Tari Subali/Quiet Battle/Loud Battle/Priest's Curse.” Wija's vocalizations sometimes lend a jarring angularity to the proceedings, but never take away from the pure musicality of the experience.

While Ziporyn is undoubtedly influenced by contemporary composers including Reich, Glass, Riley and Adams he has, over a twenty-year career, fashioned his own body of work that incorporates these influences with a larger world view. With *ShadowBang* he has created his most ambitious and, possibly, enduring work to date. Intended to be experienced *in toto*, *ShadowBang* is both an entertaining and enlightening way to spend an hour.

~ [John Kelman](#)