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More Beautiful Than Death

Either Orchestra | Accurate

Track Listing: Amiak Abet Abet; Number Three; More Beautiful Than Death; Musicawi Silt; Breaktime For Dougo; All Those Sob's; Slow Mambo For JJ; Feker Aydelmway; The Eighth Wonder

Personnel: Tom Halter, Colin Fisher (trumpet, flugelhorn); Joel Yennior (trombone); Jaleel Shaw (alto saxophone); Russ Gershon (tenor, soprano saxophone); Charlie Kohlhas (baritone saxophone); Dan Kaufman (electric & acoustic pianos, organ); Rick McLaughlin (bass); Harvey Wirht (drums); Vincent Lebron (percussion)

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The *Either Orchestras* a ten piece jazz ensemble based in Massachusetts, which was founded by saxophonist Russ Gershon in 1985. Since its inception, the group has released a series of acclaimed recordings on the Accurate record label. This, their latest CD entitled *More Beautiful than Death*, features all original compositions, six of which were composed by leader Gershon. The tunes consist of modal vamps, funk and blues anthems, an calypso and latin rhythms, replete with meaty and intricate orchestrations that feature four-part horn harmonies, which are at times, utilized as a backdrop for Gershon's forceful, exploratory saxophone. The feeling is mid-sixties Blue Note, but with more emphasis on thematic development within the written material. This is where Gershon excels; his music is fully conceived, and is fully executed by a band that is sympathetic to what he is trying to do, and that is capable of bringing Gershon's vision to light, through strong ensemble playing and individual contributions; particularly from Jaleel Shaw and Charlie Kohlhas.

The set begins with *Amiak Abet Abet* which uses a Phrygian scale as a basis for its written material, that is predicated on a repetitive tonic vamp which serves as a foundation for some interesting improvisations from Tom Halter and Jaleel Shaw. The Title cut begins at rubato pace, and builds into a medium-swing, featuring some marvelous twists and turns within its orchestrations. *All Those Sobs* is nothing but a good old-fashioned blues played at medium-slow tempo, serving as a spotlight for Tom Halter's bright and bluesy trumpet. The set closes with *The Eighth Wonder* a funky groove with an unexpected cadence. The electric piano on this cut is surely a blast from the past; bringing back fond memories of Cannonball's group with Joe Zawinul.

The music on this disc brings together all of those critical elements needed to make a good jazz record: honesty and integrity, strength and conviction; not to mention pure heart and soul. It is highly recommended to those who want to listen - simultaneously- to where jazz has been in the past, as well as where it is going in the future.

~ [Flibbert J. Goosty](#)

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