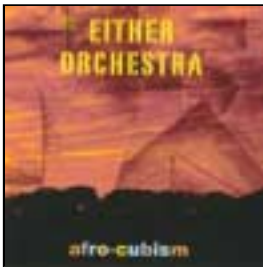




Review Courtesy AllAboutJazz.com

Afro-Cubism

Either/Orchestra | Accurate



Track Listing: Harvey's Entrance; Blue Attitude; Soul Song; Look To The Lion; Yezamed Yebaed; Don't Bother Me/No Me Molesta.

Personnel: Tom Halter – Trumpet; Colin Fisher – Trumpet; Joel Yennior – Trombone; Jeremy Udder – Alto saxophone, Flute; Russ Gershon – Tenor Saxophone; Charlie Kohlhasse – Baritone Saxophone; Gregory Burke – Piano, Rhodes Electric Piano; Rick McLaughlin – Bass; Harvey Wirht – Drums, Cymbals, Cowbell; Vicente Lebron – Congas, Bongos, Timbales, Percussion, Lead Vocals.

 [CD Review Search](#)

The Either/Orchestra has always been a little big band for those of us who don't particularly like big band jazz. Founded in 1981 by saxophonist Russ Gershon, the E/O has played nimble arrangements of everything from Duke Ellington to Bob Dylan. The orchestra draws equally from Sun Ra, Gil Evans, Frank Zappa and Dizzy Gillespie's big bands.

Seventeen years, eight recordings later, although the lineups have changed they still have something valuable to say. Russ Gershon continues to draw upon the jazz rich Boston area for upcoming musicians, as new talent replaces past stars. Gone are the likes of John Medeski, Matt Wilson, Andrew D'Angelo, and Curtis Hasselbring. They are replaced by tomorrow's jazz leaders in the making.

The constant force here, besides Gershon's presence, is baritone saxophonist Charlie Kohlhasse and trumpeter Tom Halter. As new members join this band the music takes new directions. This disc like the previous *More Beautiful Than Death* (2000) is informed by Afro-Cuban rhythms. *Afro-Cubism* continues Gershon's interest in Ethiopian Latin jazz. The E/O plays Gershon's arrangement of the 1970 Teshome Meteku composition "Yezamed Yebaed" that sums up the connection between Ethiopian and Latin music, a sort of clave meets processional music. Trombonist Joel Yennior lays down a smoking solo before Gershon slows the pace with a blues take on the theme.

This disc is part of a 2-CD session where the label split the Afro-Cuban music into this disc and plans to release a "jazz" companion entitled *Neo-Modernism* in March 2003. Focusing solely on Afro-Latin rhythm here keeps the music bundled into one

coherent theme as the compositions and soloists take center stage.

The new members of the orchestra, heard on the previous recording are percussionists Harvey Wirht from Surinam and Vicente Lebron from the Dominican Republic. Whether it was the chicken or the egg, the Afro-Latin groove has certainly influenced Russ Gershon's writing. His tenor is countered by the multi-tracked flute of Jeremy Udder on "Soul Song," all of which is under the infectious spell of the percussionists and a swift Rhapsody piano solo by Gregory Burk. Elsewhere, Charlie Kohlhas's baritone has never sounded better than on "Blue Attitude."

This may not be a new direction for the Either/Orchestra as much as an expansion of their jazz vocabulary.

~ [Mark Corroto](#)

Click the **BACK** button to return to the previous page.

All material copyright © 1996-2003 All About Jazz and contributing writers. All rights reserved.

[EDIT THIS ARTICLE](#)