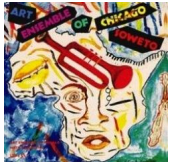


Art Ensemble of Chicago - Soweto (1990)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 21 October 2013 18:39 - Last Updated Monday, 21 October 2013 20:26

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1. *Coming soon* (Bowie) 2. *African woman* (Ngubone) 3. *Fundamental destiny* (Jarman) 4. *Fresh start* (Mitchell) 5. *Khauleza* (Amabutho Male Chorus) 6. *The bottom line* (Art Ensemble of Chicago) 7. *Black man* (Amabutho Male Chorus) Musicians: Lester Bowie - trumpet, flugelhorn, perc Joseph Jarman - sop, alto, ten, bar sax, fl, synth, perc Roscoe Mitchell - sop, alto, ten, bass saxfl, piccolo, perc Malachi Favors Maghostut - bass, belafon, perc Famoudou Don Moye - sun perc, dr, congas, bongos, bass pan drums, chimes, bells, triangles, gongs, whistels, belafon Amabutho Male Chorus: Elliot Ngubane special guest, lead vc, perc, tast Joe Leguabe vc, perc Zacheus Nyoni vc Welcome "Max" Bhe Bhe vc Kay Ngwazene vc.

This recording is the first of several collaborative projects the Art Ensemble of Chicago recorded for DIW in the early '90s and is perhaps the most successful. Here they share the stage with the fine South African vocal ensemble the Amabutho Male Chorus led by Elliot Ngubane. The two groups perform as a unit most successfully on "African Woman" and "Black Man," where the Art Ensemble, noted for its wide range of stylistic capabilities, sounds perfectly at home with the vocal ensemble, providing backing very much in the manner of a South African "Township Jazz" band, sometimes injecting a reggae-like feel into the proceedings.

Even so, the two strongest pieces on the record are achieved by each group performing on its own. "Khauleza," by the Amabutho Male Chorus, is an extraordinarily rich, propulsive traditional song; the deep harmonies achieved by the singers are breathtaking. This is almost mirrored by the following collective improvisation by the Art Ensemble, "The Bottom Line," a wonderfully dark and brooding exploration of the lower depths of this group's sound.

This is a very enjoyable recording, possibly the last all-around excellent Art Ensemble release before the group's retrenching after the departure of Joseph Jarman and the untimely death of

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Lester Bowie. --- Brian Olewnick, Rovi

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