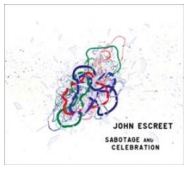
John Escreet – Sabotage and Celebration (2013)



1. Axis of Hope 2. He Who Dares 3. Sabotage and Celebration 4. The Decapitator 5. Laura Angela 6. Animal Style 7. Beyond Your Wildest Dreams Musicians: John Escreet - piano, Fender Rhodes piano, harpsichord David Binney - alto saxophone, soprano saxophones (7) Christ Potter - tenor saxophone Shane Endsley – trumpet Josh Roseman - trombone Matt Brewer – bass Jim Black – drums Adam Rogers - guitar (5, 7) Louis Cole, Genevieve Artadi, Nina Geiger - vocals (7) Fung Chern Hwei, Annette Homann – violin Hannah Levinson – viola Mariel Roberts – cello Garth Stevenson - double bass

Since his move to New York in 2006, English-born pianist John Escreet has achieved widespread recognition for his adventurous compositions and his seemingly restless creativity. On Sabotage and Celebration, Escreet augments an already formidable quintet with strings, brass, guitar, and vocals, making it his most ambitious and creative work yet.

Escreet composed most of the material in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, when most of New York City was shut down for a week. Frustrated and stuck in his apartment, Escreet turned to composing and found the resulting material to be some of his strongest. Another important national event helped shape this recording as well. It was recorded on November 7th 2012, the day after the United States' presidential election, and it reflects that feeling of uncertainty and divisiveness that the election caused throughout the nation.

The album begins with "Axis of Hope," a beautifully arranged intro for the strings section that moves seamlessly into "He Who Dares." Escreet says that his decision to include strings on the album is a result of a recent re-fascination with orchestral music and with pop music of the 1970s. "He Who Dares" proves that this instrumentation works well in the context of Escreet's cutting-edge compositions. The busy and angular melody is accompanied perfectly by Escreet's tasteful orchestrations for the strings and brass section, giving the music a sense of drama and

power. SaxophonistsDavid Binney, on alto, and Chris Potter, on tenor, prove to be the perfect soloists for interpreting Escreet's music and their solos both shine on "He Who Dares."

The album's title track starts with a minute of tense apprehension before all hell breaks loose. The angry tirade that follows slowly begins to take shape and soon gives way to an impressive solo from Escreet, who guides the rhythm section into an intense groove. Potter follows Escreet's example and offers a short but excellent solo before the tune's abrupt end.

"The Decapitator" starts with a quick melodic theme that soon fades to an ominous and moody group improvisation by the quintet. The group slowly grows in volume and intensity, culminating in an angry restatement of the original theme. "Laura Angela" adds a new texture to the album with Escreet on electric piano and guitarist, Adam Rogers, augmenting the quintet. The catchy melody and driving rock rhythm lend themselves well to solos by both Potter and Binney.

The intricate melody of "Animal Style" perfectly leads into an equally intricate solo from Escreet where he demonstrates his complex approach to improvisation. His playing is full of colors and shapes and forgoes traditional melodic playing in favor of creating contours of tension and dissonance. "Beyond Your Wildest Dreams" begins with a calm, Charles Mingus-esque melody and a tasteful piano solo that gently fades into a contrapuntal vocal interlude. This builds into the fully orchestrated and dramatic second section of the tune, which continues to grow and build until its triumphal conclusion.

Sabotage and Celebration is Escreet's most ambitious work yet, and also his most successful. The strings and brass section lend a richness to the compositions and elevate the music beyond the category of "jazz." At just 29 years old, Escreet has been labeled in the past as an "up-and-coming" composer or "one to watch out for." With Sabotage and Celebration he proves himself to be a mature artist and one of the leaders in the new generation of composers and improvisers who are pushing the boundaries of jazz. ---Andrew Luhn, allaboutjazz.com

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