**Layne Tadesse the Unstoppable Warrior**

**Amanuel Biedemariam**

As I was leaving the DC Festival Grounds, I stopped in one of the tents to explore new products. Standing inside the tent was Layne Tadesse and asked, if I have his new CD? I said no, bought the CD and listened to it on the long drive-back from the festival-grounds in Maryland to my residence in Virginia. I had no expectation or awareness of Layne’s music except what I saw on YouTube during Sawa Festival few years back. However, I was hungry to listen to some good music. Layne’s Awet N Hafsh CD is a brilliant surprise beyond what I expected.

Eritrean musicians have been churning great music especially after independence. However, Eritrean musicians by default are limited to their Eritrean followers because Eritrean music is yet to be discovered by the international community.

Moreover, Eritrea is facing tremendous hostility from the west with deliberate design to defame and isolate Eritrea by presenting a narrative that suppresses the vast cultural riches that Eritrea possesses. In schools in Sweden Eritrean children are subjected to anti Eritrea rhetoric from an early age. This is done deliberately to separate Eritrea from future generations by planting doubt and resentment.

Eritreans are constantly faced with fabrications that they are forced to rebuff in order to protect the image of their country. That means they have to fight-back harder to present Eritrea in good light. In the process promoting Eritrea’s rich cultures are sidelined.

In contrast to African and other international artists Eritreans have not fared well for a number of factors. African Artists like Baba Maal, Yousun Dur, Ali Farkatoure, Miriam Makeba and Angelique Kidjo etc… have had tremendous international success. They managed to marry their traditional music with modern music and by injecting English lyrics into their singing. That helped them to reach greater global audiences.

There are many reasons why Eritrean musicians lagged the key being the struggle for the independence. Eritrean music was forced to go underground and to the battlefields and in the process it placed Eritrea behind musically. Musicians lost their bases, musical instruments and creative environment they needed to compete. Music became a tool, inspirational-tool that sustained Eritrea during the struggle.

The main aim of the colonizers was to dilute Eritrea’s customs, culture, traditions and music in order to kill nationalism. Eritreans fought to regain their ways and music was an aspect of the struggle.

That is the reason why I am compelled to write my view on Layne’s CD, Awet-N Hafash which means “Victory for The Masses” (a credo Eritreans live by) because it represents the spirit and its continuation. It is also credible opportunity to expose Layne and in the process Eritrea.

Layne managed to fuse Tigigna Lyrics into Reggae in fascinating ways. Awet-N-Hafash is daring, sophisticated, easy to listen, thoughtful, timely and socially conscious. It tells the story of Layne and Eritrea passionately and confidently.

As a music lover and particularly reggae, I was not quite sure how Tigrignia-Reggae-fusion can sound. I was however taken aback and pleasantly surprised. Layne has powerful voice and unique ways of expressing sultry-accent-laden Tigrigna. His songs are inspirational, romantic, loving and represents Eritrean point of view in a unique way, his way.

Awet N-Hafash is the story of Eritrea and the struggle for today’s generation. His music is spiritually-grounded, the songs inspire by praising God and by interpreting his English lyrics into Tigrigna that comes through vividly. However, what makes his singing unique is that when he injects Tigrigna into his English songs he makes it the main item, the highlight and the core.

It is a work of beauty and captivating to hear him express love for the loved once in his life in a loving yet unique way, his way, the Eritrean way. The CD is full of surprises, fun, entertaining and full of energy.

The CD is categorized as reggae. It is however Jazzy, upbeat and reminiscent of the old reggae played by the likes of UB40 and Steel Pulse etc...It is well composed and technically sound traditional reggae. It is soulful, sophisticated and very ahead of its time.

It is rather rare to see a competent artist grounded firmly to his roots yet use it lever his art-work confidently. His energy is infectious and electrifying. Those who saw him on stage during the Festival in DC were entertained by one brilliant energetic-soul that is destined to do wonders for years to come.

Layne is on-a-roll and doing great things with his long time band, “Layne & 7 Seal Dub” a solid group that is churning great music. As result of their hard work they have signed with a major label, Big Shot Music Group.

Layne Tadesse is for real, he is genuine artist destined to do well and his cause is to place his loved once, his people and, above all, his country on the map grounded on Awet-N-Hafash in the name of the Martyrs.

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http://bigshotmusic.net/bsmg/reggae-artist-layne-l-t-tadesse-releasing-epic-live-ep-w-band-7-seal-dub/

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