Woodstock, N.Y.-based Creative Music Studio (CMS), brainchild of Ornette Coleman, Karl Berger and Ingrid Sertso, has had an influence that continues to resonate past its physical presence from 1971-84. Dedicated to erasing the false barriers among different musics, its workshops and concerts not only helped spread freer sounds among players identified with jazz or so-called classical music, but with participants from overseas welcomed, helped birth a sophisticated variant of world music. The first volume of over 400 hours of hitherto uncollected performances and workshops CMS is making available through the library of Columbia University, the three hours of music recorded in the late ’70s and early ’80s highlight familiar names, plus those no longer on the scene. Most valuable are tracks where jazzers try out concepts in large or small groups but there are works-music surprises. Of the tracks featuring the mostly unidentified CMS orchestra, Roscoe Mitchell’s 14-minute untitled track is the most compositionally sophisticated. Iridescent ensemble harmonies accompany the sharp bites and barks from the composer’s alto saxophone plus skimming tongue flutters from Garrett List’s trombone in the frontline. Olu Darà’s three contributions come from a contradictory space. He segments Sun Ra-like grooves pushed by florid horn section riffs with fiftish asides from a percussive flute, clanking guitar, staccato piano chording and his own lead trumpet on one track; pumping harmonica and vocalizing on another song, he gets the ensemble to add drum backbeats and blues guitar licks, resulting in a big band variant on what could be a Sonny Boy Williamson II number. Oliver Lake’s tracks fall in between those of the other composers. As Michael Gregory’s near psycadelic guitar lines reference jazz-rock, the rest of the group clings to a basic big band structure on three 1976 tunes, encouraged by Lake’s brittle alto tone. In 1979’s “Two by Two” adds the punch needed to achieve the uninhibited excitement missing from earlier tracks.

Moving to small groups, the four 1980 selections featuring drummer Ed Blackwell with soprano and tenor saxophonist Charles Brackeen are standouts, doubly precious since the drummer died in 1992 and Brackeen’s fiftful career of the ’70s and ’80s has been stalled for years. Justly celebrated for his intuitive duo work with Dewey Redman, Don Cherry and others, Blackwell is appropriately matched by the saxophonist, who recorded in the reed chair of what eventually would become Old and New Dreams. If the drummer’s snappy clanks approximate a second line parade on their own, Brackeen amplifies the mood with what sounds like reverse bugle calls. Brackeen’s hard-hitting Trane-ism gets a proper workout on the penultimate and final tracks as he jabs the themes from side-to-side before revealing an inner sensitivity that joins Blackwell to give the endings happy lift. Although his discography is ever-expanding, the contributions from bassist David Izenzon (1932-79) are buried somewhat on the three tracks under his name, with more space given to Sertso’s hippie-era vocals and Berger’s vibraphone and piano. More substantial are two tracks matching Leroy Jenkins’ tart fiddle licks and James Emery’s animated playing. Somewhere between oddly pumping or roughly strumming, Emery demonstrates the commanding presence that would soon allow him to co-found the String Trio of New York. New music pianists Frederic Rzewski and Ursula Oppens play a version of Berger’s “7 in C”, formalist presentation and careful voicing connect the two as neo-Ragtime mixes with time suspension.

As for the so-called world music, Brazilian berimbau player Nana Vasconcelos sounds essentially as he does today, if perhaps a little closer to his folksy roots. But it’s instructive to hear hand drummers trading fours on Ghanaian kora player Foday Musa Suso’s three 1980 tracks, considering the percussionists are a young Hamid Drake and Adam Rudolph. Tellingly, the main emphasis of Suso’s Mandingo Groit Society is on gypsy jazz-like string interplay between the leader and electric bassist John Marsh. The three tracks by Turkish reedplayer Ismet Siral’s group are closest to the CMS concept of sound intermingling. Still the linkage between the drum-based backing and his fiery nay tones appears a bit forced, two traditions producing exciting rhythmical parallels, but not quite meeting, like Coleman’s experiments with the Master Musicians of Joukouwa of around that same time. Vol. 1 confirms that not all the CMS sounds captured were ready for prime time. The good stuff captured here is very good indeed. The variety also suggests that many other unexposed musical gems are likely to show up on subsequent volumes.

For more information, visit innova.mu. Karl Berger is at Shapeshifter Lab Dec. 10th. See Calendar.

---

**JAZZ AT SAINT PETER’S**

**TERESE GENECO’S LITTLE BIG BAND**

SUNDAY 12/1 – JAZZ VESPERS – 5 PM
ALL ARE WELCOME

**JAMIE REYNOLDS BAND**

SUNDAY 12/1 – JAZZ VESPERS – 5 PM
ALL ARE WELCOME

**ELTHAM HIGH SCHOOL STAGE BAND FROM MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA**

SUNDAY 12/1 – JAZZ VESPERS – 5 PM
ALL ARE WELCOME

**TK BLUE QUARTET**

SUNDAY 12/1 – JAZZ VESPERS – 5 PM
ALL ARE WELCOME

**DEANNA WITKOWSKI QUARTET**

SUNDAY 12/1 – JAZZ VESPERS – 5 PM
ALL ARE WELCOME

**MELBA JOYCE**

SAINT PETER’S CHURCH
619 LEEXINGTON AVE @ 54th STREET
Chucho Valdés invites you to visit Cuba for the Havana International Jazz Festival Tour December 14-22, 2014. Legal Cuba travel.

JazzCuba.com + 1-888-965-5647 toll free