



Various Artists *Creative Music Studio Archive Selections, Vol. 1*

INNOVA 805

★★★★

Founded in 1971 by Ornette Coleman, Karl Berger and Ingrid Sertso, and based in Woodstock, New York, the Creative Music Studio brought jazz and classical musicians together with students for workshops, concerts and jam sessions until 1984.

Recently the CMS has been digitizing its archive of performances and interviews. This is the first release of the recordings made there. The three-disc set is divided up into one CD of small groups, one CD of larger ensembles and the final CD of world music.

The "Small Groups" CD features duo and trios. In their duo from 1980, Ed Blackwell and Charles Brackeen are their usual responsive selves with Blackwell's drums adding melody to Brackeen's pretty, lyrical lines or dictating rhythms to go with Brackeen's lower-register phrases. David Izenzon's trio reminds us what a great bass sound he had. It matches well against the breathy, ethereal vocals of Ingrid Sertso, who slides between pitches but never lands on the notes in a definitive manner, reflecting the avant-garde style of that time.

Discs 2 and 3 are where this compilation really gets going. Disc 2 pairs Olu Dara, Oliver Lake and Roscoe Mitchell with the CMS Orchestra. Dara's cuts exhibit a loose and fun attitude, whether stomping an off-kilter big band blues under harmonica or rising in drone harmonies underneath his trumpet. Lake's music with the orchestra works off the big band riffing, as he plays high-register notes and squeals. On "CMS Scene 2," he plays long melancholy lines over a grounded bass and long notes from the band. The one tune with Mitchell has a slow buildup with stark lines over a soft orchestra passage that was a trait of his work with the Art Ensemble. By the end, it has a herky-jerky melody played by the orchestra with great energy.

The same energy carries over to Disc 3, which leads off with several cuts from Turkish horn and windman Ismet Siral. These combine the reedy sound of Middle Eastern and Moroccan horns with a loping, repeating percussion that possesses a frenzied, ecstatic tone that Coleman and the Master Musicians of Joujouka have perfected. Siral's other tunes here are less loud, but never lack

in intensity. Nana Vasconcelos comes next with two songs that are mainly percussion followed by kora player Foday Suso, whose compositions have the West African feel of his native Ghana, complete with the driving percussion of a young Adam Rudolph and Hamid Drake.

There is a lot to take in on these three varied CDs, but what is consistent throughout is the relaxed yet committed exchange between the musicians and between the musicians and the students. It's very different from tense studio situations where the clock is ticking or a nightclub gig where a player might be trying to entertain paying patrons.

—David Kunian

Creative Music Studio Archive Selections, Vol. 1: Disc 1: Untitled 1; Untitled 2; Untitled 3; Untitled 4; May Day; Child Of The Night; I Am A Leaf For Today; 7inC; Ashiata; Okidanokh. (58:53) Disc 2: Untitled 1; Untitled 2; Untitled 3; CMS Scene 1; CMS Scene 2; CMS Scene 3; Two By Two; Untitled. (59:54) Disc 3: Oy; Untitled; Merdevin; Call And Response; Berimbau Solo; Kuumba Sora; Demba Tenkeren; Disco Gate. (58:55)

Personnel: Disc 1: Ed Blackwell, drums (1–4); Charles Brackeen, soprano, tenor saxophones (1–4); David Izenzon, bass (5–7); Ingrid Sertso, vocals (5–7); Karl Berger (5–7), Frederic Rzewski (8), Ursula Oppens (8), piano; Leroy Jenkins, violin (9–10); James Emery, guitar (9–10). Disc 2: Olu Dara, trumpet, harmonica (1–3); Oliver Lake, alto sax, flute (4–7); Michael Gregory, guitar (4–7); James Harvey (4–7), Garrett List (8), trombone; Roscoe Mitchell, saxophones (8); CMS Orchestra (1–8). Disc 3: Ismet Siral, ney, flugelhorn, soprano saxophone (1–3); Steve Gorn, bansuri flutes (1–3); Nana Vasconcelos, vocals, berimbau (4–5); Foday Suso, kora (6–8); Adam Rudolph, Hamid Drake, percussion (6–8); John Marsh, e-bass (6–8).

Ordering info: innova.mu