

Sangeeta Michael Berardi: Guitarist/ Composer/ Artist/ Poet



Earthship

“Sangeeta Michael Berardi....crafted his own vision of that Far Eastern spiritual sound into dreamlike soundscapes that are truly phenomenalweaves a nice thread between mood setting groove and electric firestormneeds to be recognized as completely different take that is rich, inventive and stellar in its execution. It's pulsating, passionate and

modern while all wrapped in a divine layer spirituality....A real treasure.” Vern

[JazzWrap](#)

“Berardi's guitar is a soaring, swooping, melodious jet turbine of an instrument, owing as much perhaps to Jimi Hendrix as to any jazz guitarist. The atmosphere of *Earthship* is one of deep spirituality, much like John Coltrane during the saxophonist's Impulse! Records years.....And when Berardi takes his solo, it's as if he is diving in from the stratosphere.....with Berardi bringing a radioactive shimmer of brash spirituality....” - Dan McClenaghan [allaboutjazz.com](#)

“...has a fine, spiritual quality that warms the heart.” - Bruce Lee Gallanter Downtown Music Gallery

“...Berardi delivers uncompromising expression, melody, energy, and communication. This recording is pure and honest, deeply from of the Coltrane mold, but filled with unique individual thought and original ideas. There is seamless weaving between composition and group improvisation, structure and group invention....” - Eric Lawrence Chronogram

"...dark-toned electric musings... might serve as a good antidote for listlessness or general malaise." --Glenn Astarita [allaboutjazz.com](#)

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- **1960-1963:** Connecticut: Gigs with own band in clubs, at Providence College, Univ. of Conn. Appearances with pianist Count Steadwell. 1963: Chicago: Gigs with organist Baby Face Willette and organist Bobby Buster Featured with guitarist Joe Diorio's Saturday morning jam session w/ Scotty Holt, bass; Gerald Donovan, drums, Gene (Clarence) Shaw, Eddie Harris, Jack DeJohnette, and

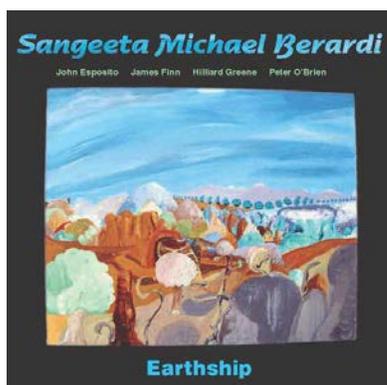
others.

- **1964:** Connecticut: Club gigs, also bass lessons with jazz and avant-garde classical virtuoso Bert Turetzky.
- **1965-1968:** Manhattan: performances in lofts and other venues with saxophonist Frank Smith, Steve Tintweiss , clarinetist Perry Robinson, trumpeter Dewey Johnson , alto saxophonist Noah Howard, trumpeter Johnnie Salgado, bassist David Izenson, drummer Muhammad Ali, and others/duo gig with bassist Scotty Holt at Louie's Tavern in Greenwich Village/CT gigs with bassist Mario Pavone and saxophonist Mark Whitecage. Studies with pianist Ronnie Ball.
- **1968-1969:** Woodstock, NY/New Paltz, NY/Manhattan: Concerts as leader with bands featuring Mark Whitecage, sax; Mario Pavone, bass; Richard Youngstein , bass; Perry Robinson, clarinet; Earl Cross, trumpet; Juma Santos, bass/ percussion; Steve Tintweiss, bass; Ollie Anderson, flute/bassoon/percussion; David Shaw (aka Dahoud Shaar) and others at St. Gregory's Church, Father Francis' Church-on-the-Mountain, the Academy Theater, Bennett College and other venues.

Also co-leading band with altoist Sonny Simmons featuring trumpeter Barbara Donald, drummer Paul Smith, bassist Juma Santos, trumpeter Earl Cross, and Ollie Anderson, flute/bassoon/percussion. Gigs with this band at Marist College, and at the Annual Sound Out Folk Festival which for the first time included Jazz (and Rock)groups. Appeared with pianist Burton Greene's group at Sound Out Festival.

Appeared with altoist Noah Howard's group in concert in Woodstock. Co-leading group with drummer Sunny Murray featuring Dave Burrell, piano; Juma Santos, bass/percussion; Ollie Anderson, bassoon/flute/percussion; the Rev. Frank Wright, saxophone; Earl Cross, trumpet; Jack Cross, trumpet. Performance at the Woodstock Town Hall.

- **Spring to Fall of 1968:** Music Director at Group 212, a multimedia arts cooperative located near Woodstock, NY, that included a theater group, painters, a rock and roll power trio and dancers in both the folk and modern traditions. The previous director had brought avant-garde classical performers such as John Cage, Nam June Paik, and others to the area.



Sangeeta brought jazz, especially cutting edge "free jazz", to Woodstock, nearby towns and schools. He organized two Openhouse/Festivals on Group 212 land. Sixty musicians from New York City, Boston, Connecticut and the upstate New York area came to the first one and participated in

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spontaneous performances and workshops including Archie Shepp, Alan Silva, Burton Greene, SuSunny Murray, NoNoah Howard, Mark Whitecage, Mario Pavone, and others. Archie Shepp, Sunny Murray and Sangeeta played as a trio, later joined by Alan Silva, cello, and Burton Greene, piano.

The second Open house included workshops and also featured two days of outdoor concerts with several bands. Among them: The Mark Whitecage/Trevor Koehler Group; The Aboriginal Music Society featuring Sonny Simmons, Barbara Donald, Sangeeta, Ollie Anderson, and Juma Santos; the Noah Howard Ensemble featuring Earl Cross; Burton Greene Group; the Rev. Frank Wright Quartet with Sunny Murray; and others.

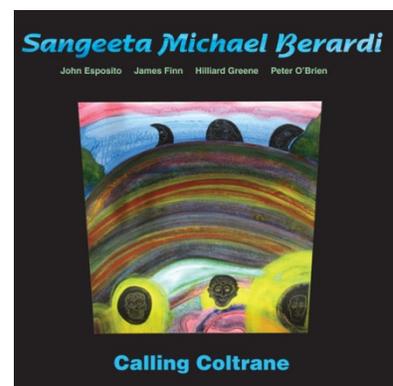
Karl Berger, founder/director of the Creative Music Studio(CMS)said of Sangeeta: "If it wasn't for him and what he did in the area I'd never have done CMS. He showed it could be done outside of Manhattan."

When Group 212 folded for lack of funds Sangeeta stayed in the Woodstock/New Paltz area and continued playing concerts with his own bands in various venues.

- **1970-1972:** Manhattan and Upstate New York: Played at Manhattan Loft Festivals with own groups and in groups of others such as: Steve Tintweiss and the Purple Why ; duets with Stafford James, bass; and another duet appearance with the drummer, J.C. Moses and with the bands of trumpeter James DuBoise and bassist David Izenson .
- **1971** member of Roswell Rudd's group (bassist Sirone, drummer Marvin Patillo) Sangeeta was featured as soloist playing Roswell's music with the Jazz Composer's Orchestra (JCO), which included Lee Konitz, Becky Friend, Enrico Rava, Karl Berger, Charlie Haden, Joe Chambers, Dewey Redman, and others.

Co-led band with saxophonist Marzette Watts at the East Village Inn in a series of weekend concerts that also featured Archie Shepp, Sun Ra and his Arkestra, and others. Sat in with Alice Coltrane's band (Jimmy Garrison, Clifford Jarvis, Frank Lowe, Benny Maupin) at the East Village Inn.

- **1972:** Upstate New York: Began a weekly concert/workshop series on the SUNY New Paltz campus. The basic quartet would often expand into a 20 piece big band with musicians ranging from blues master Eddie Kirkland to Thad Jones/Mel Lewis saxophonist Eddie Xiques.
- **1972-1980:** San Francisco: Played gigs with own bands in venues in the Haight-Ashbury, at the Last Day Saloon, the Precita Valley Neighborhood Center, on TV Channel 20, and other venues.



[Link to Calling Coltrane](#)

Appearances at the Keystone Korner with Archie Shepp (Clifford Jarvis, drums; Ronnie Boykins, bass; Siegfried Kessler, piano) and at Mapenzie in Berkeley with the Pharoah Sanders Quartet (Kirk Lightsey, piano; Henry Franklin, bass; Jimmy Hopps, drums).

Sangeeta also appeared at the Keystone Korner with his own band featuring bassist Steve Neil at a benefit for Rasahn Roland Kirk.

- **1975-1980:** San Francisco: Solo appearances at the Yoga Society of San Francisco, and with Murali playing tabla at the San Francisco Yoga Festival. Recorded *Cosmic Healing Mantras* with yogi Sant Keshavadas, harmonium and chanting, and Murali, tabla. Appearances at other ashrams, solo and with percussionists and flutes.
- **1979:** Recorded *Sangeeta: Divine Song* as a leader, featuring Archie Shepp, saxophone; Roswell Rudd, trombone; Eddie Gomez, bass; Mario Pavone, bass and Rashied Ali, drums in Connecticut for the Beat City label. (Limited release, digital master currently on Sunjump Records future release schedule.)
- **1980:** Recorded *Inside the Outside* for Beat City Records as a leader with Joe Diorio, guitar; Vea Williams, voice; Eddie Gomez, bass; Rashied Ali, drums; Geoffrey Gordon, tabla/percussion; and Rahiim Taalib, percussion/whistles. (Never released, digital master currently on Sunjump Records future release schedule, titled "Music Is Love: Manhattan Sessions".)
- **1981:** Manhattan: Gig at Tribeca club, Stilwende, with own band featuring Arthur Rhames, saxophone/piano; Vea Williams, voice; Fred Hopkins, bass; and Rashied Ali, drums. Dave Liebman appears on soprano saxophone. (Unreleased location recording of this band is currently on Sunjump Records future release schedule.)
- **1981-1984:** Sangeeta opened up his 7th Avenue loft as a workshop/performance space. Nightly regulars included: Rashied Ali, Pharoah Sanders. Sahib Sarbib, Dave Schmitter (of Art Blakey's Messengers), Rashid al Akbar. Other musicians who frequented The Loft were: Drummers Greg Bandy and Idris Muhammad (both playing in Pharoah's bands); drummer Steve McCall (with the band, Air); drummers Phillip Wilson; Sunny Murray; Eddie Moore; Art Lewis; Marvin "Boogaloo" Smith; percussionist Geoffrey Gordon; vibraphonist Michael Freeman; percussionist Trazi (playing with Dr. John's band); bass players Reggie Workman; Nicky DeGeronimo; Hakim Jami; Joonie Booth; Lindsay Horner; and others; saxophonists Joe Lovano; Billy Drewes; the Arthur Rhames; the Rev. Frank Wright; Charles Gayle; piano players Ted Saunders and Hilton Ruiz; trumpeters Jack Walrath, Kamal and Earl Cross; Clifford Jordan, George Coleman, David Murray and Cecil Taylor dropped in.

And many other players known and unknown came to play, make contacts, learn and socialize until the landlord decided to close down the building. Sangeeta was unable to start up The Loft elsewhere, although many musicians spoke to him about the value of such a center. Archie Shepp had suggested a petition signed by numerous New York musicians as a way to get government funding for a place that many musicians felt was a necessary and desirable contrast to Manhattan's mean streets.

During this time period Sangeeta also appeared at a Lower East Side venue with Sunny Murray, Rev. Frank Wright, Khan Jamal, Donald Ayler on a bill that included Philly Joe Jones, violinist Billy Bang and others. At the same event he played solo and duo with clarinetist Tony Scott.

Sangeeta was called to the bandstand at the Village Vanguard to play with the Ira Sullivan/Red Rodney Quintet along with Walter Bishop Jr. He also sat in with Sahib Sarbib's quintet at Sweet Basil.

In Philadelphia Sangeeta and Rashied Ali did a three hour radio show during which they talked about the music and played tapes and records including tapes from duo recordings at The Loft. (There are about 100 tapes, cassettes recorded at The Loft. Pharoah Sanders has told Sangeeta: "You've got me on tape playing a whole different way, not like I've been playing at the clubs.")

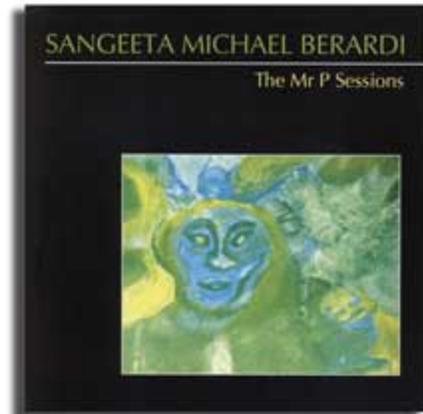
- **1985:** San Francisco: Appearance with Archie Shepp's quartet (George Cables, piano; Herbie Lewis, bass; Eddie Marshall, drums) at Kimball's. Played at Bishop King's church that is dedicated to the memory and music of John Coltrane with Rashied Ali, joined by the Bishop on soprano, Blue on tenor and others.
- **1985-1988:** Connecticut. Musically inactive publicly. Writing several prose manuscripts, poems, making drawings.
- **1988-1993:** El Cerrito, Ca. Occasional appearances: at sessions with Pharoah Sanders, with Rashied Ali at the Coltrane Church with the Coltrane Church band.
- **1994:** Appearance at the Cooler in Manhattan with Rashied Ali's quartet, By Any Means, featuring Charles Gayle, William Parker and Sangeeta. (Digital location recording done by engineer David Baker. Master available from Rashied Ali)
- **1994-1995:** Severe back injury, unable to play except very sporadically.
- **1996:** Manhattan/Woodstock/Connecticut: Gig in New Haven, Ct. with the Harold Zinno Sextet. Manhattan: Digitally recorded duet with Rashied Ali for possible CD project. (Twenty-six minute piece, "New World Language/Old World Roots" available as a demo)

Woodstock: Sangeeta produced digital masters of his new band, Earth Ship, which featured John Esposito, piano; Jim Finn, saxophone/flute/bass clarinet; Hilliard "Hill" Greene, bass and Peter O'Brien, drums. 1997: Concert in Woodstock featuring: John Esposito, piano; John Menegon, bass; Jeff Siegal, drums; Sangeeta, guitar. This music later was released on Sunjump Records. Appearing also on "Love Supreme" Jayna Nelson, flute; Joe Giardullo, alto saxophone. Appearance at "Celebrating Coltrane" festival at Bard College, duo: Sangeeta, guitar; John Esposito, drums.

Duo recording session with Sangeeta, guitar; Joe Giardullo, saxophones, flute, bass clarinet.

- **1998—2000:** Performances across US with appearances in Florida, Tennessee, North Carolina and Rochester, NY. Interviewed and asked to contribute music for a radio documentary on John Coltrane being produced by Steve Rowland. Author Lewis Porter requested Bio Info on Sangeeta for latest edition of Baker's Jazz Dictionary of Musicians. Sangeeta devoted the latter part of this period and early 2001 to writing new music, making mixed media paintings and completing a novel. He also worked on short stories and a collection of poetry. During this time Sangeeta began to show symptoms of Parkinson's Disease and to have difficulty playing the guitar.
- **2008** music from the 1996 recording session was released as *Earthship* on Sunjump Records.
- **2009** Sangeeta was a guest lecturer at Bard College
- **2010** his work was again featured at Bard College in a presentation in which his paintings were projected while his music from the *Earthship* cd was played and his poetry was read by Mikhail Horowitz.
- **2011** film maker Burrell Crohn began shooting a documentary film on Sangeeta's life and work as a musician, painter and poet titled [*Playing With Parkinson's*](#). The film documents Sangeeta's most recent record date which was comprised of two days at NRS studio in Catskill, NY. Musicians on the date were Sangeeta on vocals, acoustic and electric guitars and Tibetan singing bowls, Kendra Shank vocals and electronic loops, Rosi Hertlein, violin and vocals, Mitch Kessler, flute, soprano, alto, tenor saxes and bass clarinet, John Esposito, piano and prepared piano, Hilliard Greene, bass and Peter O'Brien, drums. The cd *Mr P*, is an upcoming Sunjump release.
- **2012** in January , the second part of the 1996 Earthship sessions was released on Sunjump as *Calling Coltrane*.

- **2013** double CD music and spoken word, The Mr P Sessions released on Sunjump Records. Gigs at Saugerties Performing Arts Factory, Saugerties, NY and Zeb's, NYC. guest artist lecturer at Bard College.



[Link to Mr P Sessions](#)

[YouTube Videos](#)

[Link to *Earthship* CD](#)

[Link to *Calling Coltrane* CD](#)

[Link to *Playing With Parkinson's* film trailer](#)

DISCOGRAPHY:

1. *The Gods*....ESP Records 1966....Sangeeta(Michael Berardi)appears as a guest soloist with The Gods who anticipated the punk rock movement by a few years in one of the first free jazz/punk collaborations.
2. *Rock and Other Four Letter Words*—created by J Marks & Shipen Lebzelter on Columbia Records...1968...with personnel including Sangeeta Michael Berardi , Andrew Cyrille, Burton Greene, Alan Silva, Roswell Rudd, Jimmy Owens, Warren Smith, Laurence Cook and other Free Jazz players, plus rock musicians & Alex Bradford directing the Greater Abyssinian Choir.
3. Sound track for *Brand X* by Pop artist Wynn Chamberlain with Burton Greene, Alan Silva, Andy Warhol superstar UltraViolet and other musicians recorded in 1968 for this feature length underground movie.
4. *Cosmic Healing Mantras*....1976.....Sangeeta plays acoustic guitar with Sant Keshavadas, harmonium and chants and Murali, tabla.

5. *Sangeeta: Divine Song* Beat City Records/New Pulse Records 1979...Sangeeta leads a group featuring Archie Shepp, tenor saxophone; Roswell Rudd, trombone; Eddie Gomez, bass; Mario Pavone, bass; and Rashied Ali, drums. (Limited release, digital master currently scheduled for future release by Sunjump Records. The vinyl recording is a collector's item.)

6. *Art Spirit*, duets with reed & flute player Joe Giardullo recorded in December 1997, was released by Boxholder Music in 2003. The spontaneously composed duets received excellent reviews in the U.S. & Europe.

7. *Earthship* 2008 Sunjump Records from October 1996 digitally recorded masters produced by Sangeeta of his band, Earthship, featuring John Esposito, piano; Jim Finn, saxophone/flute/bass clarinet; Hilliard "Hill" Greene, bass; and Peter O'Brien, drums.

8. *Calling Coltrane* 2012 Sunjump Records- more material from the 1996 Earthship sessions.

9. double CD music and spoken word, *The Mr P Sessions*, SJCD0014 released on Sunjump Records.

Unreleased recordings:

1. *Inside the Outside*.....Beat City Records/New Pulse Records....1980...Sangeeta leads a group featuring Joe Diorio, guitar; Vea Williams, voice; Eddie Gomez, bass; Rashied Ali, drums; Geoffrey Gordon, tabla/percussion; Rahiim Taalib, percussion/whistles. (Never released, digital master currently scheduled for future release by Sunjump Records under new title: "Manhattan Sessions: Music Is Love".)

2. *Live at Stilwende*....1981... unreleased location recording with Sangeeta leading a band featuring Arthur Rhames, saxophone/piano; Vea Williams, voice; the Fred Hopkins, bass; Rashied Ali, drums; and Dave Liebman sitting in on soprano saxophone, upcoming Sunjump release.

3. 1981-1984: Approximately 100 analog cassette recordings of nightly performances done at Sangeeta's 7th Avenue loft, among them some possibly historically significant pairings and groupings. Certainly some significant music which if enhanced with current technology could be available as masters. Pharoah Sanders has indicated that he is on tape here playing a "different way."

4. *By Any Means: Live at the Cooler*.....1994...Almost three hours of music digitally recorded by engineer David Baker of Rashied Ali's quartet featuring Charles Gayle, saxophone; William Parker, bass and Sangeeta, guitar. (Masters available from Rashied Ali)

5. New World Language, Old World Roots...1996...Sangeeta and Rashied Ali in a twenty-six minute duet.

Publishing Companies: Sangeeta Music & Sangeeta Press

Sangeeta Music produced the live recording at the Cooler with Sangeeta featured with Rashied Ali's band By Any Means(Charles Gayle and William Parker).

Sangeeta Press produced a collection of Sangeeta's drawings *Colors in the Morning Sky* designed as a coloring book for the whole family. It is an innovative approach using actual drawings with different registers of lines instead of the thick black line approach. The drawings literally reference music as in the ones with flutes, but also visually reflect the improvisational nature of Sangeeta's music.

WHO IS SANGEETA?

Excerpt from a manuscript-in-progress by Dr. Francesco Patricolo, Phd., author of "Bop-a-Ganda: Hip Stories from the Jazz Rap Genre.":

As one observer noted Sangeeta(Michael Berardi)has been existing—to paraphrase Charles Mingus' book title—"beneath the underground."

But, his work has not gone unnoticed by his fellow musicians.

The great drummer Rashied Ali comments: "Sangeeta is one of those heavy cats who the musicians know about, the guitar players know his stuff, but it's never gone much further than that."

Pharoah Sanders offers this cryptic assessment of Sangeeta's work: "Quality.. spiritual energy.. a concept of his own."

Guitarist John Abercrombie says: "Sangeeta is a very fine, fresh player, one of the few musicians who extend the tradition of the jazz guitar. He is a free musician with a lyrical and melodic approach."

Guitarist John Scofield goes on the record with: "Sangeeta is a great and unique guitar player."

Guitarist Mike Stern says: "Geeta's a bad cat. You got to hear this man play the guitar."

Guitarist James 'Blood' Ulmer says: "Sangeeta sure can smoke. Unbelievable, unbelievable."

Guitarist Joe Diorio says: "I've known Sangeeta all my life and he's always been his own man. He's been experimenting with music his own way since he first started. I find him to be a true original."

Joe adds this anecdote: "In 1967 I was on the road and when I got to New York I hung out with Sangeeta and crashed at his pad on Houston St. As I woke up I heard him improvise a twenty minute piece of music that broke every rule I had been taught. That piece stayed in my mind, I thought about it for five years. In fact, I've never forgotten it."

Archie Shepp says: "Sangeeta has a vibrato like B.B. King. He makes his guitar sing like nobody I ever heard before."

Sonny Simmons, when he heard Sangeeta for the first time in 1968, said: "I never heard nobody play the guitar like that, not even Sonny Sharrock."

Roswell Rudd says: "This man is the original cat with the cosmic fingers."

Apparently there are many other players, both known and unknown, who could and would comment on Sangeeta and his music. Perhaps the answer to the question, "Who is Sangeeta?" is best answered by them.

Sangeetab@earthlink.net

(510) 528-7417