

Booklist

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Sound Experiments: The Music of the AACM.

By Paul Steinbeck

Sept. 2022. 304p. illus. Univ. of Chicago, \$32 (9780226820095); e-book, \$31.99 (9780226820439). 781.65092

Roscoe Mitchell, Anthony Braxton, Muhal Richard Abrams, George Lewis, Fred Anderson, Wadada Leo Smith, Nicole Mitchell are jazz musicians who should be better known. All were associated with the AACM, the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians. Founded in 1965 on Chicago's South Side, the AACM was and still is, emphasizes Steinbeck, "the most significant collective organization in the history of jazz and experimental music." In this erudite but lively account, Steinbeck presents the first in-depth study of the AACM's musicians and music as he traces the evolution of the group's innovative work over many decades. He also discusses individual albums, including Roscoe Mitchell's *Sound* and Abrams' *Levels and Degrees of Light*, both from the 1960s, and Anderson's *Volume Two*, recorded in 1999 at the Velvet Lounge, which Steinbeck calls the heart of the South Side jazz community and unofficial headquarters of the AACM. Concluding chapters highlight more recent projects, including "Emmett Till: Defiant, Fearless," a movement from Smith's *Ten Freedom Summers* (2011). *Sound Experiments* also features scores and diagrams by the musicians themselves. An important addition to the jazz bookshelf.

— June Sawyers