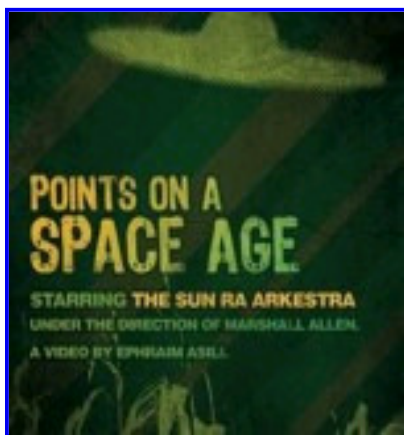


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[Points on a Space Age](#)

July 2, 2010



Title: [Points on a Space Age](#)

Artist: [Sun Ra Arkestra](#)

Format: DVD (Color, NTSC, all regions)

Label: MVD Visual

Catalog No.: MVDV4774

Release date: 2009

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After Sun Ra “left planet Earth” in 1993, Marshall Allen took over the direction of the Sun Ra Arkestra. Devoid of its creator, the band, now composed of nineteen musicians, still continues to evolve in the same direction—“Outer Space.” Searching new spaces virtual as well as aural, the Arkestra always attempts to offer new possibilities and new reflections to its listeners, chasing a mystical quest, according to Sun Ra’s impulse since the mid-1950s—the search of an “Other.”

Points on a Space Age follows the Sun Ra Arkestra under the direction of [Marshall Allen](#), interweaving interviews, archival images of the first steps on the moon and of the space conquest, and videos from concerts. This 33min. documentary (erroneously advertised as 60 min.), directed by Ephraim Asili, can be viewed as an exploration of the current work of these musicians, both former and new members of the Arkestra, who define themselves as an “art-for-its-own-sake scholarly band.” Asili discovered the band for the first time in 1998 during a festival where the Arkestra started, according to him, “some sort of procession

through the park under the rain.” Making contact first with Tyrone Hill (long time trombone player from the Arkestra, and a close friend of Sun Ra), Asili eventually caught up to the rest of the band. While the film was originally released in 2007, it did not become available on DVD until 2009.

No explanations are given about Sun Ra’s philosophy, but it’s undeniable throughout this documentary that his disciples are walking the same path. Still wearing their celestial hats and their Egyptian abayas, the Sun Ra Arkestra projects its crowd into distant and deep spheres, celebrating ancient Egypt as a technologically advanced civilization deeply rooted in “Outer Space.” The exploration of new sounds, the core of the band research, is made possible by the appropriation and mastery of new technologies. These are the quintessential aspects of the afro-futurist discourse in the eyes of each member. The Sun Ra Arkestra attempts to integrate its public in its sphere, and encourages active participation both in its music and in its universe, the *Omniverse*. As Sun Ra said, “Omniverse is the totality of all the universes and *you* are welcome to be citizen of the Omniverse”.

“Space-Age Jazz” was born more than 50 years ago and continues to live today. Quoting a line from the video, “the final chapter is being written right now,” and according to Ephraim Asili, *Points on a Space Age* is a “glimpse into this final chapter.”

Reviewed by Guillaume Dupetit

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