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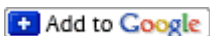
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Points on a Space Age

[MVD Entertainment Group](#) // Unrated // May 19, 2009

List Price: \$19.95 [Buy now and save at [Amazon](#)]

Review by [Tyler Foster](#) | posted June 5, 2009 | [E-mail the Author](#) | [Start a Discussion](#)

Points on a Space Age is a niche project: a documentary about the Sun Ra Arkestra, an experimental 1950's band formed around an obscure philosophy created by a man of the same name. Unfortunately, the documentary fails to open the concepts up to a broader audience; the project seems aimed at existing fans and existing fans alone, and there's a terrible typo on the DVD case sure to leave any consumer feeling ripped off.

The film, directed by Ephraim Asili, takes a look at the Arkestra both then and now, with tastes of the band performing and including some vintage space program footage of rockets taking off and flying to the moon. The DVD case informs me that Sun Ra was sent to Earth to "prepare human beings for a future centered around space travel". Unfortunately, while the documentary makes some attempts, with bold motion text, to explain some of the philosophies of Sun Ra, I learned more by reading said summary than I did watching the film itself. Maybe Asili thinks these details should be absorbed through said synopsis, and are subtextual or things you should already know, but I don't buy that.

The band itself sounds fairly jazzy. Comedian Paul F. Tomkins joked that jazz is "a bunch of guys, all playing different songs at the same time...it's like a whole genre of music that's about defying you to like it." That pretty much sums up my thoughts on the music itself. It's not off-putting or painful, but it isn't exactly tuneful either. Asili



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also interviews several members of the band, who talk about their experiences discovering Sun Ra and eventually joining the band. Unfortunately, and I'm amazed that two of the documentaries I've watched for DVDTalk have had such a seemingly obvious problem, the interviewees are not credited on screen, so you don't know who any of these people are.

I was hoping the film would develop and improve as it went on, but something shocking occurred. The DVD case notes a running time of 60 minutes, but *Points on a Space Age* only runs 32:41, approximately 27 minutes shorter than it advertises. Even if you're the most devoted Sun Ra Arkestra fan in the world, or unless they offer some method of slowing time I'm unaware of, this DVD is going to be a massive letdown.

The DVD

Point on a Space Age comes packed into a white keep case, with some intriguing front cover art (which is what inspired me to pick the disc from the DVDTalk screener pool. The back cover, however, is all text, and the menu is a poorly altered version of the cover art. There is no insert.

The Video and Audio

The old footage of rockets and space shuttles aside, this 1.33:1 full frame presentation still looks fairly awful. Edge enhancement is apparent yet the image still seems unnaturally soft, and colors are smeary, showing hints of chroma noise (or perhaps even a touch of outright color bleeding). The Dolby Digital 2.0 audio handles the music and studio-recorded narration acceptably, although source audio for some of the interviews is filled with echo and kinda mushy. Subtitles or closed captioning might have helped, but neither are present.

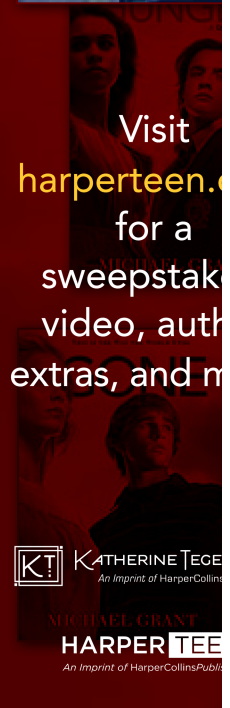
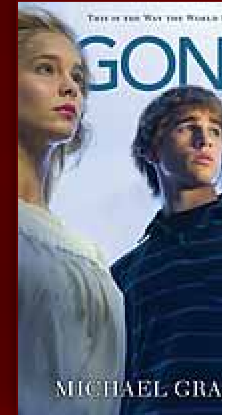
The Extras/b>Zilch.

Conclusion

Skip it. It's a terrible DVD on its own, not to mention that it's half as short as it claims to be and will only appeal to a select audience.

Please check out my other DVDTalk DVD and theatrical reviews [here](#) and my film blog The Following Preview [here](#).

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