

Sun Ra Arkestra (under the direction of Marshall Allan)
"Points on a Space Age" (MVD) This video captures the Arkestra in 2006 and 2007 (over a decade after Sun Ra left this planet) as they perform, and reflect upon, their bizarre, beautiful music. The nature of videotape, and footage of the mundane (sitting backstage, ascending grey staircases) should subvert the grandiosity of the Arkestra, making their glittering couture look more like silly costumes than interstellar spaceware. But their music and spirit is so magnificent that you can't make them look small or normal. Surely the artistic direction of filmmaker Ephraim Asili helps, with its use of collage, text, and repetition. Showing classic space travel and sci fi footage (and footage of Ra himself), using sound bites from Kennedy's space exploration speeches, and editing to the unusual rhythms of no-linear jazz allows him to do something special here. This is a dynamic, amazing video piece that no Arkestra fan should miss.