

Space Is the Place

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Space Is the Place is an 82-minute science fiction film made in 1972 and released in 1974.^{[1][2]} It was directed by John Coney, written by Sun Ra and Joshua Smith, and features Sun Ra and his Arkestra. A soundtrack was released on Evidence Records.

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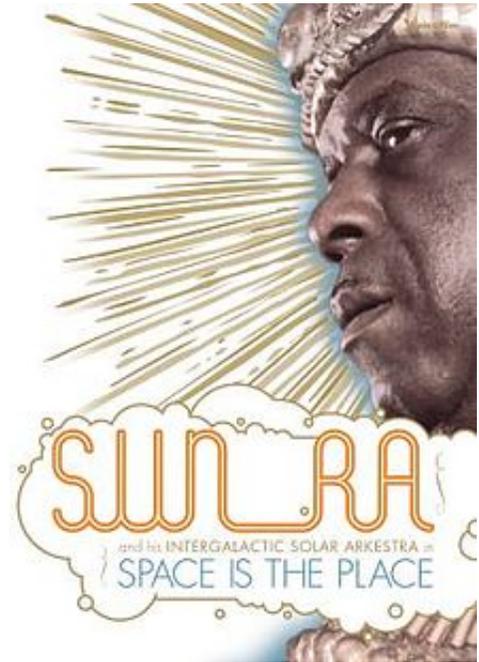
Background

During the late-1960s and early-1970s, Sun Ra and his ensemble made several forays to California. In 1971, Sun Ra taught a course, "The Black Man in the Cosmos," at University of California, Berkeley.^[3] Over the course of these California visits, Sun Ra came to the attention of Jim Newman, who produced the film *Space Is the Place* starring Sun Ra and his Arkestra, and based, in part, on Sun Ra's Berkeley lectures.^[3]

Plot

Sun Ra, who has been reported lost since his European tour in June 1969, lands on a new planet in outerspace with his crew "The Arkestra" and decides to settle African Americans on this planet. The medium of transportation he had chosen is music. He travels back in time and returns to the Chicago strip club where he used to play piano with the name "Sonny Ray" in 1943. There he confronts The Overseer (Ray Johnson), a pimp-overlord, and they agree on a duel at cards for the fate of the Black race. Each card drawn is a minor goal to achieve for Ra or The Overseer which will determine the winner of the duel. Then, to present time, Ra disembarks from his spaceship at Oakland and tries to spread his word by meeting with young Blacks at an Oakland youth centre and opening an "employment agency" to recruit people eager to move to the planet. He also agrees with Jimmy Fey (Christopher Brooks), the minion of

Space Is the Place



Region 1 DVD Cover

Directed by	John Coney
Produced by	Jim Newman
Written by	Sun Ra Joshua Smith
Starring	Sun Ra Raymond Johnson
Music by	Sun Ra
Cinematography	Seth Hill
Editing by	Barbara Pokras
Release dates	November 1974
Running time	85 min.
Country	United States
Language	English

The Overseer, to arrange radio interviews, a record album, and eventually a concert that will help him dictate his message. At the end, Ra takes Fey's "Black parts" with him to the spaceship, leaving him with his White parts. Fey, now acting white, leaves The Overseer who loses the duel. The planet Earth is destroyed after Ra's spaceship flies into space.

Ra's greatest adversary in his quest is The Overseer, incarnation of evil in the Black community who poses himself to be a community leader and a man of charity. But in fact, he is the tool of the power structure. Ra is also pursued by White government agents (presumably from FBI) who attempt to assassinate him. On the other hand, Jimmy Fey is a representative of Black people in the entertainment industry and mass media.

Director's cut

In 2003, the movie was re-released in its entire 82-minute format on DVD, after a heavily edited 63-minute version on VHS.

References

- [^] official website for "Space is the Place" (<http://www.outerspacewaysinc.com/index.htm>), fictionalized treatment based on Sun Ra's ideas and philosophy, featuring his Arkestra, filmed in 1972 and 1973.
- [^] *Space Is the Place* (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0072195/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- [^] ^{*a*} ^{*b*} Cook, Richard; Brian Morton (2006) [1992]. *The Penguin Guide to Jazz Recordings*. The Penguin Guide to Jazz (in English) (8th ed.). New York: Penguin. pp. p. 1247. ISBN 0-14-102327-9.

External links

- *Space Is the Place* (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0072195/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- *Space Is the Place* (<http://www.allmovie.com/movie/v47663>) at allmovie

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