



MARSHALL ALLEN

alto saxophone, flute, clarinet, oboe, kora, E.V.I., composition, arrangements, conduction

Marshall Belford Allen, alto saxophonist, multi-instrumentalist, composer, bandleader, and arranger, was born May 25, 1924 in Louisville, Kentucky and started clarinet lessons at age 10. At 18, he enlisted in the Army's 92nd Infantry (renowned as the *Buffalo Soldiers*), playing clarinet and alto saxophone in the 17th Division Special Service Band. Stationed in Paris during World War II, he played with pianist Art Simmons and saxophonist Don Byas, and he toured and recorded with James Moody during the late '40's. Upon honorable discharge, Mr. Allen enrolled in the Paris Conservatory of Music, studying clarinet with Delacluse. Returning to the States in 1951, Marshall settled in Chicago, where he led his own bands, playing in clubs and dance halls, while writing his own music and arrangements, as he continues to do today.

During the mid-'50's, Marshall met Sun Ra and became a student of his precepts. After joining the Sun Ra Arkestra in 1958, Marshall Allen led Sun Ra's formidable reed section for over 40 years (a role akin to the position of Johnny Hodges in the Duke Ellington orchestra). Marshall Allen lived, rehearsed, toured and recorded with Sun Ra almost exclusively for much of his musical career, leading the reed section during the time that the Sun Ra Arkestra

won the "Downbeat" polls as number-one big band in 1988 and 1989. As a featured soloist with the Arkestra, Marshall pioneered the avant-garde jazz movement of the early '60's, expanding a style rooted in Johnny Hodges and Don Byas, and influencing all leading avant-garde saxophonists thereafter. During this time, Marshall also invented a woodwind instrument he called the "morrow," utilizing a saxophone mouthpiece attached to an open-hole wooden body. (This instrument is currently being marketed under another name, as Marshall never secured a patent on his invention).

Marshall Allen was one of the first jazz musicians to play traditional African music and what is now called "world music," working frequently with Olatunji and his *Drums of Passion*. In fact, Marshall is most likely the sole jazz musician who builds and plays the kora (a popular West African multi-stringed instrument), and he has been a major factor in its introduction to American audiences, as well as the world at large.

Marshall Allen is featured on over 200 Sun Ra releases, as well as appearing as special guest soloist in concert and on recordings with such diverse groups as NRBQ, Phish, Sonic Youth, Diggable Planets, Terry Adams, and Medeski, Martin & Wood.

Perhaps most significantly, Marshall Allen assumed the helm of the Sun Ra Arkestra in 1995 after the ascension of Sun Ra in 1993 and John Gilmore in 1995. Mr. Allen continues to reside at the Sun Ra Residence in Philadelphia, composing, writing and arranging for the Arkestra much like his mentor, totally committed to a life of discipline centered totally on the study, research, and further development of Sun Ra's musical precepts.

Marshall maintains the Sun Ra residence as a living museum dedicated to the compilation, restoration and preservation of Sun Ra's music, memorabilia, and artifacts. Marshall has launched the Sun Ra Arkestra into a dimension beyond that of mere "ghost" band by writing fresh arrangements of Sun Ra's music, as well as composing new music for the Arkestra. He works unceasingly to keep the big-band tradition alive, reworking arrangements of the music of Fletcher Henderson and Jimmie Lunceford for the Arkestra to play, along with many other American standards.

Marshall Allen is recognized all over the world as the premier avant-garde saxophonist, appearing in solo concert in London in 1995, duet with Terry Adams in 1997 in Canada, and featured in articles in "JazzTimes" (12/02), "Signal to Noise" Magazine, and innumerable other music magazines and radio and TV interviews. He is frequently called upon to give master classes, lectures, and demonstrations of Sun Ra's musical precepts, and he keeps himself accessible to all who have an interest in Sun Ra's legacy.

Marshall Allen plays the alto saxophone, flute, clarinet, oboe, kora, and E.V.I. (Electronic Valve Instrument).

FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://www.sunraarkestra.com>

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