

# WIZARD OF THE SUN

Sun Ra Mythic Dream Arkestra  
under the direction of Marshall Allen

## MUSIC FILM

VALPOSCHIAVO SEPTEMBER 2019

CONCEPT / SCRIPT / DIRECTION

Cornelia C. Müller / KA



WIZARD OF THE SUN is the working title of the music film on MARSHALL ALLEN and the SUN RA MYTHIC DREAM ARKESTRA. The music film will spiral around the MUSIC, the music of Sun Ra, the music and arrangements of Marshall Allen, the meaning, the significance, the message, the mythical dimension of music. And the film will find astonishing sceneries in the Swiss Alps of Valposchiavo (GR), to correspond to the space music.

The film will use gorgeous Nature sceneries, concert performances, dress rehearsals, performances for the local school kids and interviews of Marshall Allen and some of the musicians of the Arkestra, long-term members as well as younger musicians.

The filming will occur with several cameras depending on the scene. For the concerts we will use 4 fixed placed cameras in order to capture the Arkestra in action – musicians and dancers in a sea of darkness and light. For the interviews we will use 2 cameras and for the Nature scenes also 4 cameras.

In the following description the Sun Ra Mythic Dream Arkestra and the places where the filming occurs are presented. The chosen scenery corresponds to a certain expression and message.

Cornelia Mueller / KA who won the Recognition Award of the Canton of Grisons Switzerland in 2014 and just issued her first mute film OEDIPUS, is directing this precious music film project.

# SUN RA MYTHIC DREAM ARKESTRA

under the direction of MARSHALL ALLEN



The SUN RA MYTHIC DREAM ARKESTRA is Marshall Allen's dream version of the Sun Ra Arkestra and includes 22 musicians and 3 dancers for this film project. The dream enriches the jazz and cosmo songs with harp, violin, viola, violoncello, sarangi, double bass, with two African harps kora and bolong, with vocals, saxophones, clarinets, trumpets, trombones, flutes, French horn, guitar, electronic valve instrument, with the recorded voice of Sun Ra, with piano and Moog analog synthesizer, with drums, conga, bongo, surdo and percussion. Acrobatic female and male dancers are also included.

Marshall's dream first surfaced at the UNCOOL Festival Poschiavo 2012 in the southeastern Swiss Alps with THE SUN RA ARKESTRA, and in 2014 on the European tour with THE SUN RA CENTENNIAL DREAM ARKESTRA<sup>1</sup> in a slightly different cast. This link shows video footage of the 2012 Cosmo Music Performances: <http://www.uncool.ch/2017/arkestra.php>.

Sun Ra (1914 - 1993) was the founder of his world famous and prize winning Arkestra and he wrote music and messages for the people of planet Earth and for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. At Sun Ra's side is his Deputy Marshall Allen (\* 1924) and member of the Arkestra for 60 years by now. In 1995 Marshall became the Arkestra's director and leads it to new and unknown horizons. He accepted Sun Ra's legacy without hesitation and leads the Arkestra to ever more creative, innovative, sparkling, cosmic performances. In the music film, multi-instrumentalist, composer and music director Marshall Allen finally receives the attention and recognition he deserves - for his bond with Sun Ra, for his commitment to the Sun Ra Arkestra, and the preservation of the Sun Ra House in Philadelphia, for the music, the compositions and arrangements of Sun Ra and his own. He keeps Sun Ra's music alive in the original context of the Arkestra, extending and mediating it.

The world needs this music and it needs this music film. Marshall Allen: *"What you need and what you want"* – is not necessarily the same. What you need are existential things, what you want are often superfluous or even harmful things. Music is spiritual, mental, psychic food that nourishes the whole body. Music for well-being, for creativity, for understanding, for peace, for communication in this universal language and for imaginative, unexpected imaging.

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<sup>1</sup> 1914 Sun Ra's arrival on planet Earth

## **SUN RA MYTHIC DREAM ARKESTRA under the direction of MARSHALL ALLEN**

[MARSHALL ALLEN](#) alto saxophone, flute, clarinet, Electric Valve Instrument, kora

[TARA MIDDLETON](#) vocals, violin

[JAMES STEWART](#) tenor saxophone, flute

[KNOEL SCOTT](#) alto saxophone, vocals, percussion

N.N. tenor saxophone

N.N. clarinet

[DANNY RAY THOMPSON](#) baritone saxophone, flute, conga und bongo drums

[MICHAEL RAY](#) trumpet, vocals

[CECIL BROOKS](#) trumpet

[VINCENT CHANCEY](#) French horn

[CRAIG HARRIS](#) trombone

EMMETT McDONALD trombone

[NINA BOGOMAS](#) harp

[KASH KILLION](#) violoncello, sarangi, bolong

[GWEN LASTER](#) violin

[MELANIE DYER](#) viola

[GEORGE BURTON](#) piano, Moog analog synthesizer

[DAVID HOTEPI](#) guitar

[TYLER MITCHELL](#) double bass

[WAYNE ANTONY SMITH JR.](#) drums

[RON McBEE](#) percussion

[ELSON NASCIMENTO](#) surdo drum, percussion

N.N. dance

N.N. dance

N.N. dance



MARSHALL ALLEN



TARA MIDDLETON



MICHAEL RAY





JAMES STEWART



KNOEL SCOTT



DANNY RAY THOMPSON





FARID BARON



VINCENT CHANCEY



CECIL BROOKS



DAVE DAVIS





NINA BOGOMAS



KASH KILLION



TYLER MITCHELL



DAVID HOTEPI





WAYNE SMITH JR.



ELSON NASCIMENTO

## PUBLICATIONS

Here are some publications about Sun Ra and his Omniverse. There are biographical contributions, discographies, as well as interviews and publications of his poetic and philosophical texts.

John F. Szwed: *Space Is The Place – The Lives and Times of Sun Ra*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1997, [ISBN 0-679-43589-1](#) (biography)

Hartmut Geerken, Bernhard Hefe: *Omniverse Sun Ra*, Waitawhile, D-82211 Wartaweil, 1994, private print (diskography with reproductions in color of LP-[Cover](#))

Robert Campbell, Chris Trent: *The Earthly Recordings of Sun Ra, 2nd edition*, Cadence Jazz Books, Northwood, NY, 2000, [ISBN 1-881993-35-3](#) (detailed discography)

Hartmut Geerken (Hrsg.): *Sun Ra, The Immeasurable Equation*, Books on Demand, Norderstedt, 2005, [ISBN 3-8334-2659-4](#) (Sun Ra's lyric)

*Sun Ra. Interviews & Essays*, edited by John Sinclair. Headpress, London 2010, [ISBN 978-1-900486-72-9](#)

And here is a part of Sun Ra's discography at Allmusic.

<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/sun-ra-mn0000924232/discography>

Sun Ra And His Arkestra – In The Orbit Of Ra (2014) FULL ALBUM

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVaJWIVHg\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVaJWIVHg_c)

MUSIC FOR THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY – The Sun Ra Arkestra under the direction of Marshall Allen

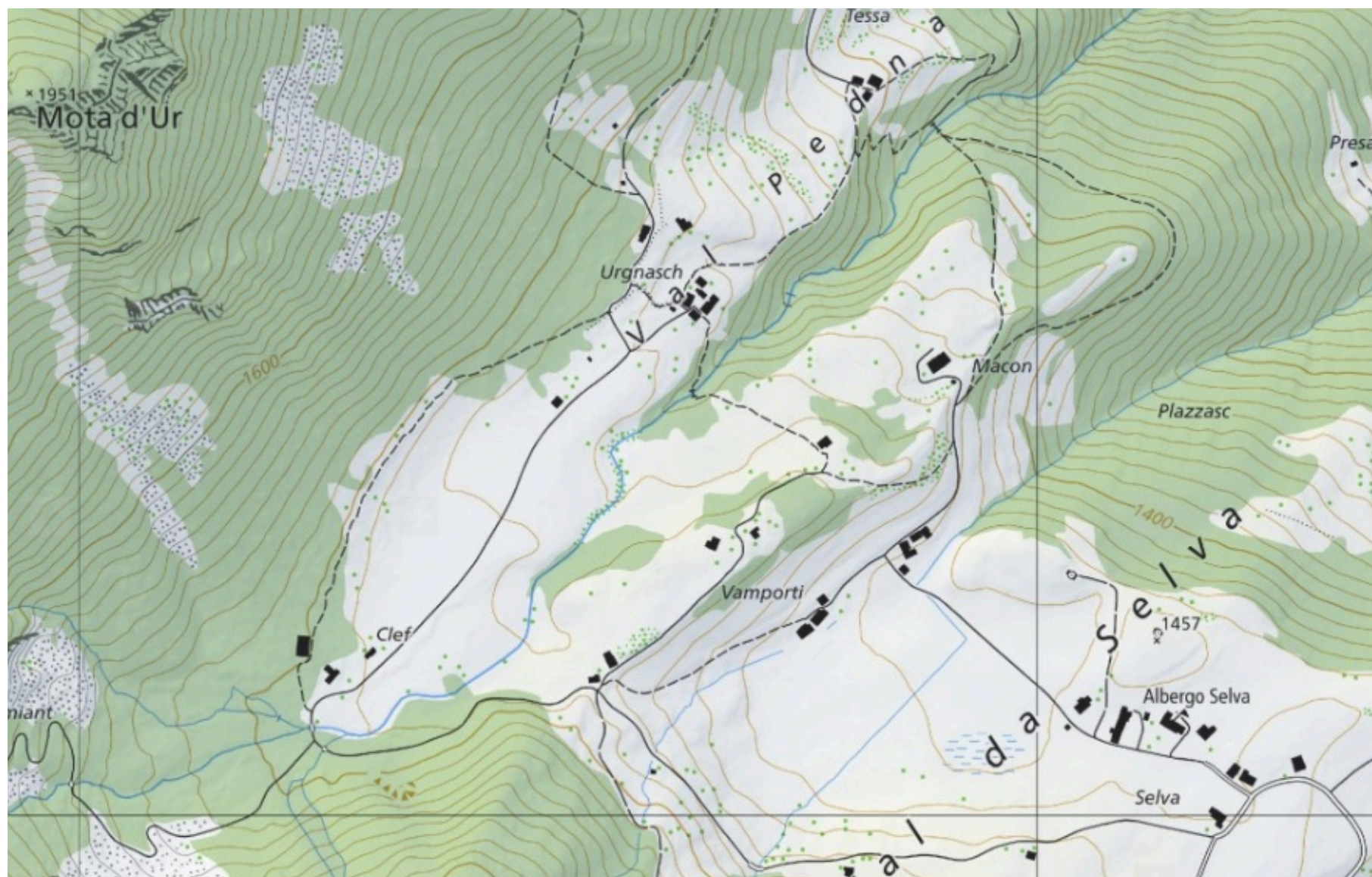
live at uncool 2003 Poschiavo Swiss Alps

<https://www.uncool.ch/2017/edition.php>

There is also a Sun Ra Convention, founded by some of the authors quoted above, whose members meet regularly to discuss new releases. Sun Ra's music is reissued with several recordings per year. There is also plenty of sound material that has never been released. On the Internet you will find countless videos from the beginnings of the Sun Ra Arkestra to performances under Marshall Allen's direction as well as numerous interviews.

# SELVA

1457 m.a.s.l.





## THE AWAKENING OF THE SUN RA MYTHIC DREAM ARKESTRA

### Forest of Selva

They all landed from far away in the forest of Selva and find themselves in Marshall's dream of sound and music.... And so, Marshall is calling for his musicians to realize this ancient dream of myth, a dream of cosmic sounds in space, the sounds of light and beauty as Sun Ra taught him.

The awakening scene will take place in the forest of Selva, a wild almost untouched forest of fir trees growing between gigantic rocks overgrown with a variation of moss and some smaller plants as fern. There are also small trails that lead across the forest, softly paved with the many needles and fir cones. It also passes by several gigantic hills of wood ant colonies.

The Arkestra members are wearing precious sparkling costumes and carry their instruments. Marshall ambles along a trail and finds his Arkestra dispatched, resting, hidden and asleep, prostrated on the soft green moss, bedded on overgrown rocks, hidden among boulders.... The flying melody on his alto saxophone awakes them from their slumber and one after the other is answering back and follow him on the meandering path, joining in the jubilee....

The cameras anticipate and follow Marshall walking and playing and also focus on the various musicians and dancers showing their awakening.

The Awakening is always a beginning, a change of state from unconsciousness to consciousness, a widening of perception and understanding, a transient way.... as Sun Ra puts it: *"If you wake up now, it won't be too soon."*

And thus, the Awakening will open the tale on the music as the first scene and leads into the color and light spheres of music performed on stage.

























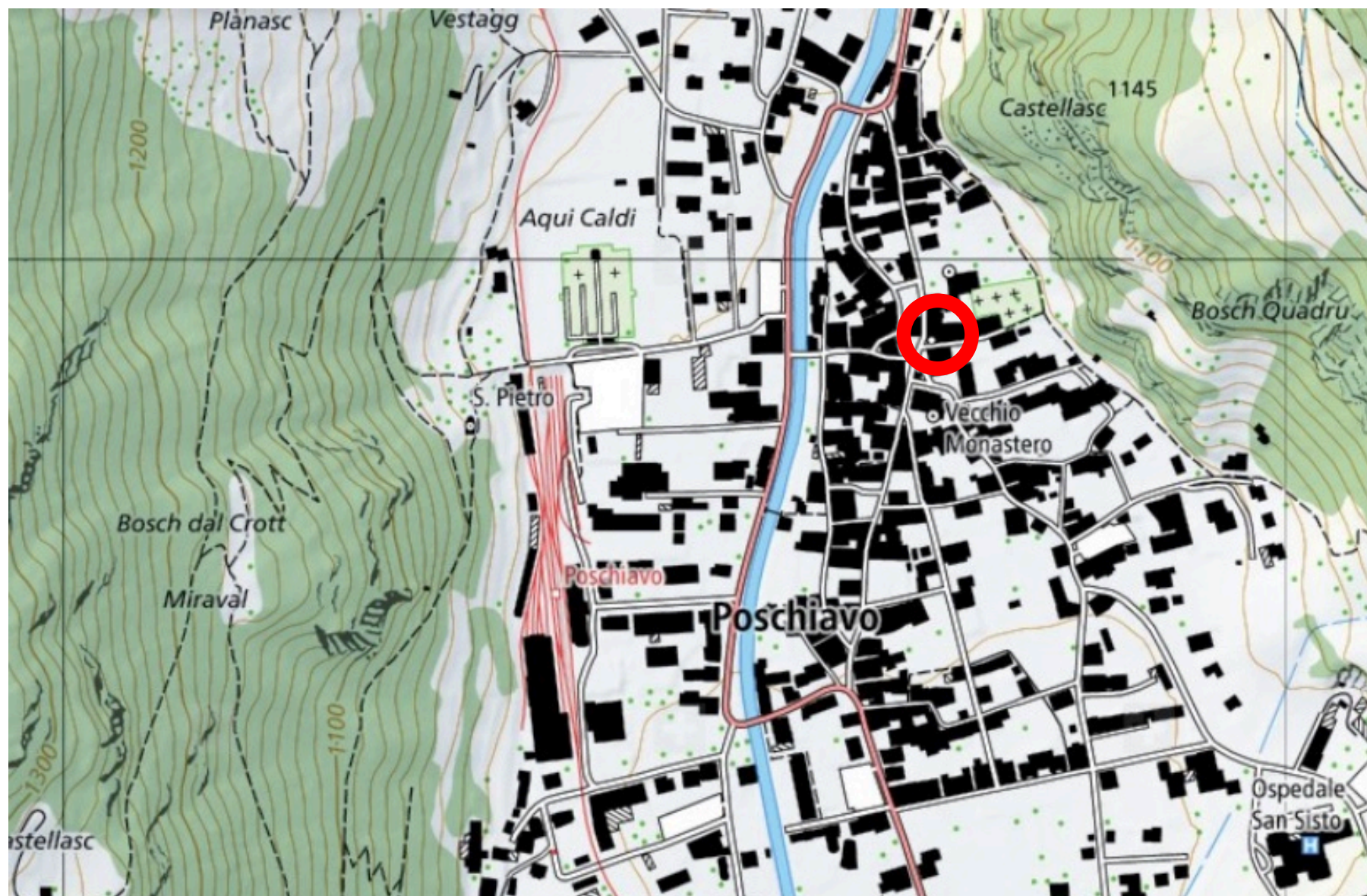


LA TOR

Poschiavo

1014 m.a.s.l.







## CONCERTS

### La Tor Poschiavo

La Tor at the Plaza da Comün is the concert space of choice. It will be arranged in a special way in order to elicit the feeling of outer space. At the moment there are several ideas how to use light and projections, where to position the 22 musicians, leaving space to the dancers and the public.

The hall holds about 100 spectators. Four public performances are offered, and two dress rehearsals are open to the school kids of the valley.

All rehearsals and performances are recorded and filmed. It allows the film team to develop strategic positions for interesting shots and close-ups during the rehearsals. The recordings of the performances and some of the rehearsals will be used in the music film.

*Breathing Light* is a Ganzfelds light installation by the US artist James Turrell that evokes the feeling of being suspended in space – a complete loss of the depth perception, also described as *white out*, an irritating experience like in a snowstorm or in dense fog. There is no orientation. It would be quite unusual to create such an atmosphere in the hall that would recall somewhat the endlessness and maybe even the weightlessness in space.

All these ideas have to be investigated and a detailed script will be elaborated.







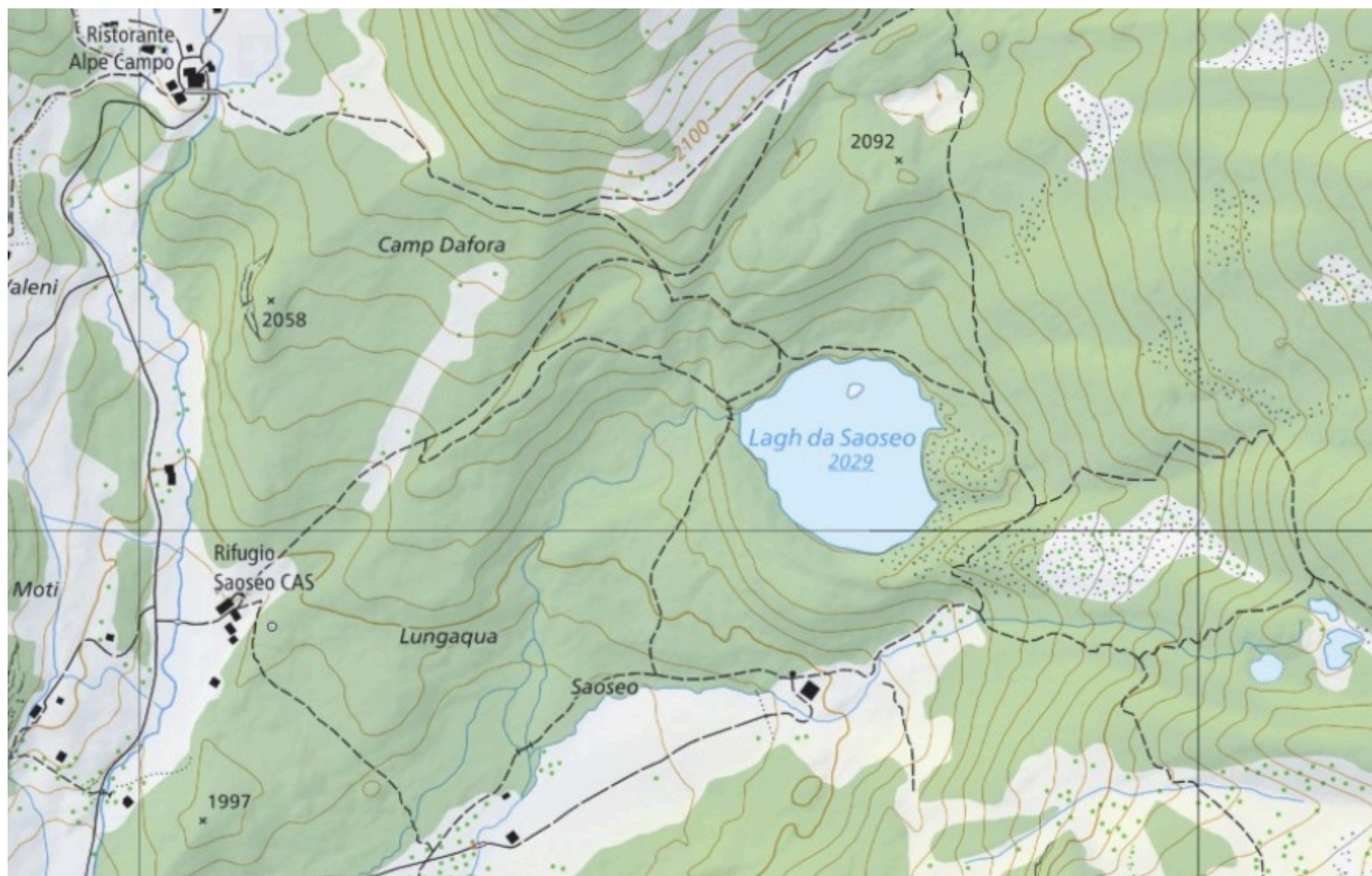


# SAOSEO

Val di Campo

2029 m.a.s.l.





## DANCE OF THE FOUR ELEMENTS

### Lake Saoseo

At the Lake Saoseo, the four dancers will dance at different locations expressing the nature of the four elements – air, water, earth and sun. They will also walk in the water of the lake waving their light and glittering fabrics. In the background the small overgrown rock island with its two larch trees and the Piz Palü with its dwindling glacier are radiating in the morning sun. The dancing will be accompanied by African harps, Marshall Allen on the kora and Kash Killion on the bolong. Melodic tunes and rhythm will enlighten the scene.

The four elements are the origins of life. Air, water, earth and sun are precious, and their wonderful abundance will be expressed in the dance and the music. As in the Sun Ra song: *"Sometimes you should appreciate the work of nature's God"*. That's the theme – the appreciation of the elements, the acknowledgement of their preciousness and of their indispensability.

The Dance of the Four Elements follows the flow of the two African harps and is embedded in the film between the live recordings of the concerts.

























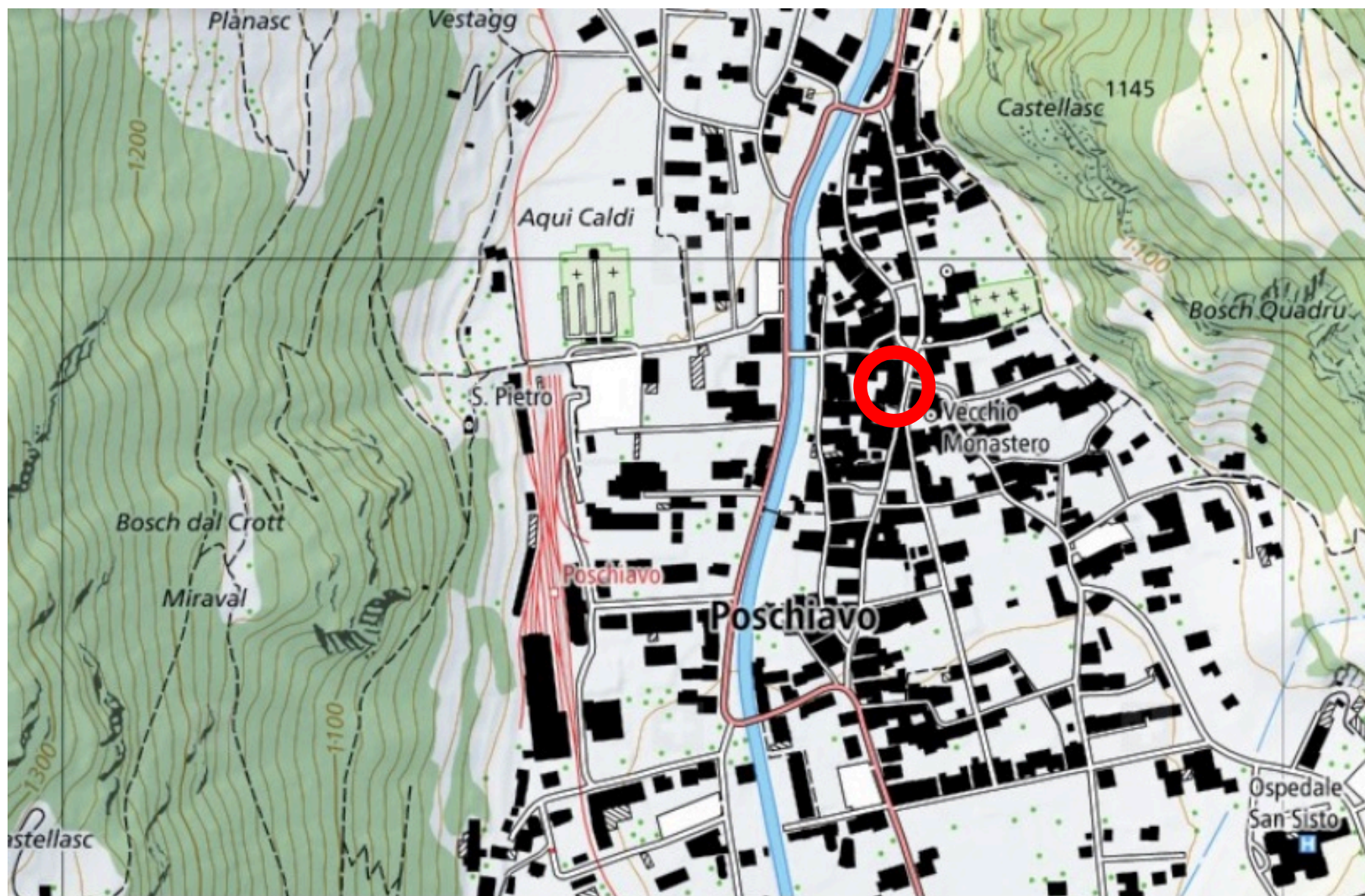


# SALA DELLE SIBILLE

Hotel Albrici Poschiavo

1457 m.a.s.l.





## INTERVIEWS

Sala delle Sibille Hotel Albrici Poschiavo

The interviews of Marshall Allen as well as long term and also younger musicians of the Arkestra will take place in the historic Hotel Albrici in the Room of the Sibyls. The interviews orbit around the MUSIC, investigating the essence, the significance, the message of music. The topic MUSIC MAGIC MESSAGE gives an idea of the content of the interviews.

### ROOM OF THE SIBYLS

<https://www.hotelalbrici.ch/en/hotel/history/room-of-the-sibyls>

One of the Hotel Albrici's most interesting historic features is the "Room of the Sibyls" on the first floor. The room is named after the set of 12 oil paintings of mythological Sibyls. Sibyls were mythological characters that were supposed to be able to predict the future. This presentation is especially remarkable since the Sibyls are not Christian figures, yet they are all painted with scenes from the Bible in the background. The origin of the paintings is unknown although one can assume that the Baron de Bassus brought the collection back from Germany. The 12 paintings are oil on linen with a height of 82cm and width of 66cm.

The room's walls are covered for 2/3 of their height by historic wooden paneling. The door frames are richly decorated with half pillars covered with twisted vine. Above the door is a carved frame holding the coat of arms of the palace's original builder: the Massella-Gaudenzi family.

In this room you will discover an old and lovely spinet piano built in the year 1781, a mirror in a nicely carved wooden frame from 1710 and an historic clock showing the time as well as the day and month.















SYBILLA TYBVRTINA I





SYBILLA HELLESPONTICA. 4.







SYBILLA PHRYGIA 12



# PRU DAL VENT

2210 m.a.s.l.





## FAREWELL

### Pru dal Vent

Pru dal Vent (2210) is the name of the plateau above Alp Grüm. The sensation this open space suggests is a somewhat flying feeling in close reach of the sky. Its name means *Meadow of the Wind* and it allows a perfect view of the surrounding peaks. In the east you see Corno di Dosedè (3232), Scima di Saoseo (3264), Piz dal Teo (3047), Piz Sena (3074) and Sassalbo (2597) and in the west Curnasel (2809), Piz Varuna (3454), Piz Canton (3147), the Palü glacier, Piz Palü (3900) and Piz Caral (3420). In the south lies the Poschiavo Valley with its turquoise lake and is bordered by the Valtellina and the Bergamasque Alps.

On the plateau of Pru dal Vent, the musicians and dancers gather together for one last clarion upbeat greeting to mountains and valleys before they disappear between the young larch trees...

The filming will capture these two sceneries – the east with the glowing calcareous white rock and the west with its ice caped peak and an ever-melting glacier setting free giant waterfalls that cascade over the uncovered colored rock. It is the farewell and closing scene of the musical voyage with the Sun Ra Mythic Dream Arkestra.



























MUSIC FILM

MUSIC MAGIC MESSAGE

## MUSIC FILM

The music film is a creative process that uses a script as well as improvisation, i.e. the translation of the idea into a momentary vibration, into an inspiration of the artistic expression. It is an artistic, imaginative cosmic film that makes full use of the experimental and creative approaches to film design. It inspires the playful possibility to react visually, to improvise to the music, to illustrate it in pictures, in movements, colors, shapes, with overlaps and layers, and to transform it into imagery. The music film will seek the unknown in order to correspond to the multifacetedness and interpretations of meaning. *Space is the Place* – there the journey will also visually detach itself from earthly confines and limitations. The feeling of weightlessness, of flying, carried by the music, will find its moving counterpart.

The COSMO MUSIC is presented from Sun Ra's musical and poetic Omniverse<sup>2</sup>. It is music from the treasure of a gigantic legacy of the great master Sun Ra, who landed on planet Earth and worked miracles for a time. These original compositions will be played at La Tor in Poschiavo. The dress rehearsals provide an opportunity to invite kids from local (music) schools as well as guests, supporters of the project, press, radio and television. Thus, the Music Film Project will also offer young people the opportunity to experience an extraordinary concert and immerse themselves in the world of the Cosmo Music.

The music film focuses on the musical heritage of Sun Ra (see biography) and on Marshall Allen's compositions and arrangements. The focus is Marshall Allen who has performed with the Sun Ra Arkestra since 1958. Sun Ra named Marshall his deputy, and he has filled this role, becoming the music director of the legendary Sun Ra Arkestra and shaping and directing it since 1995 (see biography).

MUSIC MAGIC MESSAGE forms the content of the proposed film. It will encompass concert and rehearsal recordings, nature shots and interviews with the musicians about the music, about its magical dimension and its message.

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<sup>2</sup> Omniverse = sum of all universes, an expression that Sun Ra has created.



The film works with Marshall's concept of THE VIBRATIONS OF THE DAY. The vibrations always have an impact on the controllable and uncontrollable events of the day, on coincidence, on what unexpectedly comes to you, like a shooting star linking to a secret wish.... Something that develops in spiraling variations, nothing remains the same, everything is in continuous motion, manifests itself and disappears - as fleeting as the music. The oscillations, the vibrations similarly have an effect on the music, the kind of arrangements, the choice of the pieces, the tempo, the improvisation, the musical idea and its immediate realization.

An unknown future transforms itself into the present. Musically (and otherwise in life), we are dealing with THE UNKNOWN and THE IMPOSSIBLE.

The unknown lies before us, so to speak, because who actually knows what the next day, the next hour will hold...? The unknown is also the improvisation, because it arises at the very moment as inspiration, as intuition, in response to the sound just heard, as rhythmic movement. It creates a musical dialogue, or a solo soaring above the interwoven Arkestra sounds. The unknown cannot be grasped until it manifests itself, and then it becomes inexistent, stored in memory. In this case stored as acoustic and visual concert recordings.

Sun Ra has asked his musicians to play the unknown, to express what they were unaware of, did not know, did not learn - "*outside the square, in the spiral*", as Marshall Allen puts it. The unknown also appears as the impossible. How is it possible to play something unknown?

The impossible is also beyond the present, for the present contains only the possible. Sun Ra did not content himself with the possible, but strove for the impossible, or at least the seemingly impossible. For in the realization of the impossible, the impossible becomes possible and something new appears on the horizon of impossibility.

The question is also what guides the musical expression, what makes a melody, a sound touching, beguiling, seducing.... Is matter made of music, of tones, of cosmic sounds, of vibrations, of movements like the "*string theory*" postulates in physics? This would mean that music is able to arrange and shape matter.

Marshall Allen: *"Music can make you happy, music can make you cry, music can destroy, and music can heal"*. He also says: *"I play for my own well-being, not for fame, not for money, but for my own well-being and if the music does me some good I can give **you** some"*. Music for your own healing, music for your own well-being as a basis for healing and the well-being of others. *"Music is the Healing Force of the Universe"* as Albert Ayler, saxophonist and composer says. Music is one of the existential needs of man. Singing, clapping hands, stomping in rhythm, swinging and dancing.... and discovering that all sorts of materials are suitable for producing rhythmic sounds and melodies - wood, stone, rattles of dried fruits, nut shells, drums.... accompanied by flutes carved from animal bones in paleolithic age.... music has always been there, at all times in human development.

Music is a language that everyone understands, even though it has an enormously wide variety of its expressive forms, reveals a cultural affiliation and bears individual traits. Music is magical. Through music magic can be understood, its enchanting effect, its secret message. Other languages require translation, music does not. It is immediately understandable. The music of the Sun Ra Mythic Dream Arkestra accompanies the film with compositions by Sun Ra and Marshall Allen, arranged by this brilliant, musical director.



## **FILM TEAM**

The film team will be casted in collaboration with a Swiss film school and thus offering young cameramen a guided and also improvised experience of filming in the context of music. Since the cameras will be placed in fixed position, especially during the concerts in order to guarantee an undisturbed performance, a minimum of four equal cameras will be needed. Therefor one camera will be focused on Marshall Allen, another one on the soloing performers, one on the dancers and one overlooking the whole Arkestra.

## **RECORDING TEAM**

The recording team is directed by the long-term collaborator Stephan Grüssi (RSI Lugano) and his assistants. The concerts will be performed acoustically and recorded live. In the nature scenes the music will be recorded as well, but also dubbed from the concerts. The interviews will also be recorded for the film.

## **SCHEDULE**

The schedule is shown below. Rehearsals before the performances are necessary. Interviews will occur during the whole stay of the musicians (not only on marked days). Depending on the weather forecast the outdoor filming might be shifted to another day.

# MUSIC FILM PROJECT IN THE VALPOSCHIAVO

## SCHEDULE AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2019

	AUGUST / SEPTEMBER	DAY	
<b>MARSHALL, KASH, DANCERS</b>			
ARRIVAL POSCHIAVO	27	TUE	
LOCATION SURVEY	28	WED	LAGH DA SAOSEO 2029
FILMING	29	THU	LAGH DA SAOSEO
FILMING	30	FRI	LAGH DA SAOSEO
LOCATION SURVEY / INTERVIEW	31	SAT	SELVA 1450
LOCATION SURVEY / INTERVIEW	1	SUN	PRU DAL VENT 2210
<b>SUN RA MYTHIC DREAM ARKESTRA</b>			
DAY OFF / ARRIVAL POSCHIAVO	2	MON	
REHEARSAL / INTERVIEW	3	TUE	
REHEARSAL / INTERVIEW	4	WED	
DRESS REHEARSAL / INTERVIEW	5	THU	SCHOOL
CONCERT	6	FRI	
CONCERT	7	SAT	
FILMING	8	SUN	SELVA
FILMING	9	MON	SELVA
FILMING	10	TUE	PRU DAL VENT
FILMING	11	WED	PRU DAL VENT
DRESS REHEARSAL / INTERVIEW	12	THU	SCHOOL
CONCERT	13	FRI	
CONCERT	14	SAT	
FAREWELL DINNER	15	SUN	
DEPARTURE POSCHIAVO	16	MON	



# COSTUMES / UNIFORMS

Isa Mehnert Berlin

photos - Bernd Schönberger

## **COSTUMES / UNIFORMS**

Atelier Isa Mehnert Berlin

Isa Mehnert is a theatre costume designer based in Berlin and was engaged 2012 for the first time to design costumes for the Sun Ra Arkestra and the UNCOOL festival. She also designed the costumes for the centennial celebration of Sun Ra's arrival day in 2014. Now she realized a new collection of space costumes for the music film. Some of the costumes are presented here by Isa's crew.... Have a look.

































# SUMMARY

## CONCLUSION

The film presents the music of the SUN RA MYTHIC DREAM ARKESTRA under the direction of MARSHALL ALLEN and focuses on the legendary music of Sun Ra and his Deputy Marshall Allen who is a member of the Arkestra since 1958 and directing it since 1995. The music film uses material recorded in nature scenes, in the woods, at the alpine lake, in the mountains, in interviews, rehearsals and concerts. All is happening in late August and September 2019 in the Swiss Alps in the enchanting valley of Poschiavo and in its main village (Canton of Grisons).

The music film spirals around the theme of MUSIC MAGIC MESSAGE and relies on the music and its rhythm to compose the visual imaginary imagery of space and sounds.

The script will be elaborated in the course of the next months. The film schools in Switzerland are contacted for a close collaboration in order to receive professional support and guarantee an excellent product.

The postproduction is envisioned for 2020 and will be taken care of later when the possibilities are clear. The postproduction is not included in the presented budget that focuses on the costs to record the first part of the music film project.

The music film will be an artistic approach to the music of the legendary American composer, musician, poet, philosopher and artist Sun Ra and his most dedicated follower Marshall Allen.

Cornelia Müller / KA  
Poschiavo, September 29<sup>th</sup>2018





SUN RA 1979 – photo Val Wilmer

## COLLABORATION

CONCEPT / SCRIPT / DIRECTION

KA / Cornelia C. Müller

ORGANIZATION / PRODUCTION

Associazione Cultura la cial / uncool edition

MUSIC

SUN RA MYTHIC DREAM ARKESTRA  
under the direction of MARSHALL ALLEN

COSTUMES

Isa Mehnert

INTERVIEWS

Fabrizio Gilardino

CAMERA

in collaboration with Swiss film school

SOUND RECORDING

Stephan Grüssi and assistants

SOUND MIXING / MASTERING

Olaf Rupp

CUT / MONTAGE

in collaboration with Swiss film school  
Mauro Lardi  
KA