



Sciensonic Laboratories releases historic large ensemble recording, made on the 50th anniversary of Sun Ra's classic *Heliocentric Worlds*

Release date: Aug. 21, 2017 (Eclipse Day)



On April 20, 1965, one of the all-time classic recordings of adventurous and far-reaching music was made in New York City. The great Sun Ra and his Solar Arkestra convened in engineer Richard L. Alderson's RLA Studio and crafted an amazing and enigmatic recording which still astonishes listeners to this day. *The Heliocentric Worlds of Sun Ra* was issued on Bernard Stollman's forward-looking ESP label, and it sounds like no other record made by anyone, ever. Somewhere between outer space chamber music and avant-garde jazz, it introduced 1965 listeners to sounds not normally heard in improvised music such as timpani, piccolo, and the haunting bass marimba. Some months later, *Volume Two* followed with the addition of chromatic sets of "tuned bongos" and the eerie, electronic Clavioline. The distinctive sonic palette of these two recordings, along with an unusual musical methodology which blurs the lines between composition and improvisation, makes for utterly unique music which truly lives up to the admonition on the back of the original LP jackets, "YOU NEVER HEARD SUCH SOUNDS IN YOUR LIFE."

Now, fifty years later, Sciensonic Laboratories has created an historic recording in the spirit of *Heliocentric Worlds*. On April 20, 2015, original participant Marshall Allen (now 93, and highly active as leader of the Arkestra) and longtime Arkestra member Danny Thompson came in from Philadelphia. Original engineer Richard Alderson - who had not worked with Allen since the *Heliocentric* sessions in 1965 - was tracked down and recruited to engineer the date. Even more remarkable was the presence of the original bass marimba that Sun Ra played on *Heliocentric Worlds* - the very same instrument - now in the possession of Sciensonic Laboratories. This made for a truly historic three-way reunion - fifty years later to the day! - between Allen, Alderson, and the original instrument that figured so prominently on the 1965 LP.



Marshall Allen, Richard Alderson, and the bass marimba that Sun Ra played on *Heliocentric Worlds* in 1965

The results of this session include Marshall Allen's first-ever recordings on piano and bass marimba, in addition to his customary alto sax and EVI. Danny Thompson played baritone sax and flute. The rest of the original instrumentation was realized by an incredible cast of some of New York's most creative musicians: Frank Lacy, Philip Harper, Pat O'Leary, Yosvany Terry, Tim Newman, Matt Wilson and JD Parran. It was a marathon day, with the second half being devoted to the slightly smaller instrumentation of *Heliocentric Worlds, Volume 2*. (A strange twist was added when word reached us during the sessions of the passing of Bernard Stollman - whose ESP label had issued the *Heliocentric* LPs - on the very same day.)

Despite many setbacks including pouring rain, technical difficulties which had to be overcome, and then long delays in the mixing process, the results of this massive effort can finally be heard. This is startling and unforgettable music, captured with extraordinary clarity and sonic detail.



Marshall Allen plays the bass marimba (photo by Danny Thompson)

These sessions are NOT re-dos or recreations. None of the original music was duplicated. Rather, the goal was to use the sonic palette of the original recordings - the same instrumentation and distinctive sounds - to create new and imaginative music... music that would honor the spirit of the original sessions, while also setting off into new and completely uncharted terrain. This is ScienSonic's most ambitious project yet, and the results are remarkable. This music could only have taken place at ScienSonic Laboratories, with these musicians, these sounds. This is music that *takes* you somewhere... somewhere utterly unfamiliar, yet strangely inviting. Or, as Sun Ra used to say, "Somewhere there." From an audiophile standpoint, Alderson calls it "the best recording I have ever made." And while it is unlike any other Laboratory production to date, this music certainly lives up to the ScienSonic motto, "*Worlds of Tomorrow Through Sound.*"

Look for Volume Two of this material to be issued in 2018.

Please visit www.sciensonic.net to learn more about our previous releases with Julian Thayer, Marshall Allen, Roscoe Mitchell, Henry Grimes and more. Become a Laboratory Member!