

NEH Application Cover sheet (TR-293344)

Media Projects Production

PROJECT DIRECTOR

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INSTITUTION

Firelight Media
New York, NY 10031-6403

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Title: *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*

Grant period: From 2023-11-01 to 2024-09-30

Project field(s): Arts, Other

Description of project: Firelight Media is seeking a production grant in the amount of \$700,000 for a project on the life of jazz musician, composer, arranger, poet, philosopher and performer Sun Ra and his influence on today's burgeoning Afrofuturist movement. The centerpiece of the project is a documentary film with the working title Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism that will be broadcast as part of PBS' American Masters series. Sun Ra used his talent, intelligence, and originality to imagine his way out of racism and create a vision for a Black space age future.

BUDGET

Outright request	700,000.00	Cost sharing	0.00
Matching request	0.00	Total budget	700,000.00
Total NEH request	700,000.00		

GRANT ADMINISTRATOR

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Attachment 1: Narrative
Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism



A. Nature of the Request

Firelight Media is seeking a production grant in the amount of \$700,000 for a project on the life of jazz musician, composer, arranger, poet, philosopher and performer Sun Ra and his influence on today's burgeoning Afrofuturist movement. The centerpiece of the project is a documentary film with the working title *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* that will be broadcast as part of PBS' *American Masters* series. Sun Ra used his talent, intelligence, and originality to imagine his way out of racism and create a vision for a Black space age future. This would be the first documentary to seriously consider Sun Ra's personal experiences as a Black man growing up in Jim Crow America, the musical and philosophical currents that shaped him, and how it is that nearly 30 years after his death he has come to be seen as a founding father of Afrofuturism, described by author Ytasha Womack as *the intersection between Black culture, technology, liberation and the imagination... a way of bridging the future and the past and essentially helping to reimagine the experience of people of color.*

Guided by Executive Producer, Stanley Nelson and Director, Christine Turner, *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* will make use of the full range of new and archival footage, recordings, and photographs that capture the life of Sun Ra, a true American master, as well as the vibrancy and possibility represented by Afrofuturism. Given the way in which this film sits at the intersection of art, identity, performance, past and future, we envision supplementary digital media and events linking the film to festivals exhibits, concerts and workshops. These will be funded separately and are not part of our request to NEH.

B. Program synopsis

Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism

I didn't find being Black in America a very pleasant experience, but I have to have something and that something was creating something that nobody owned but us.

Herman Poole Blount was born on May 22, 1914, in Birmingham, Alabama and departed this earth on May 30, 1993, as Sun Ra. Along the way he became a conscientious objector, legally changed his name to Le Sony'r Ra, forged a vision of a Black space age future, created a big band that toured the world and continues to this day, wrote over 1000 jazz compositions, issued more than 100 self-produced records, pioneered the use of electronic keyboards, and published

volumes of broadsheets and poetry. The year following his death, cultural critic Mark Dery coined the term “Afrofuturism” in his essay *Black to the Future*, crediting the “...intergalactic big-band jazz churned out by Sun Ra’s *Intergalactic Omniverse Arkestra*” as a primal force.

Compelling and strange, Sun Ra reached back to ancient Egypt to claim all of civilization as Black and fused it with the dawn of the space age to assert Black-ness as its essence. Even his language was ahead of its time: the nature of the “omniverse” itself was Black. He claimed to have been “teleported” to Saturn where he was told that the world would descend into chaos and that he must speak through music ... *to coordinate the minds of people into an intelligent reach for a better world, and an intelligent approach to the living future*. His “earth departure day” (Sun Ra did not believe in conventional notions of birth and death) may have occurred nearly three decades ago, but his unique approach to what would come to be called Afrofuturism has been claimed by successive generations – and for them, Sun Ra is the undisputed founding father.

Following a brief opening that takes audiences, sonically and visually, into Sun Ra’s “Astro-Black” world, *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* will be divided into five major sections. Each will rely on a blend of first-person narrative from Sun Ra himself, third-party interviews with scholars, artists, and musicians, moving images from live performances and still photography. While showcasing Sun Ra’s remarkable achievements and lasting legacy, *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* will also chronicle his struggles to keep a big band together, his differences with the civil rights movement, and his frustration at not receiving greater recognition while living.

The Magic City will describe Herman Poole Blount’s early years in Birmingham (aka “The Magic City”), Alabama, the most segregated city on the planet, where he discovered his musical genius, felt the sting of Jim Crow racism, and became a conscientious objector.

Becoming Sun Ra will show how Herman Poole Blount became Sun Ra through his life and work in Chicago’s Bronzeville, amidst the crosscurrents of Black Nationalism, mysticism, Egyptology, jazz and the dawn of the space age.

Creating Something That Nobody Owned But Us will portray the remarkably creative decade of the 1960s in which Sun Ra blazed a path through New York’s vibrant downtown jazz scene, and the Harlem-based Black Arts Movement, while creating an astonishingly original fusion of music, poetry and performance.

Omniverse will explore how Sun Ra brought his music and vision to the world through teaching a college course at U.C. Berkeley; journeys to Egypt, the heart of Black civilization, and Nigeria for the 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture; and “cosmo drama” performances featuring 30 or more elaborately costumed musicians, singers, dancers, percussionists that toured the world up until his “earth departure day” on May 30, 1993.

The Living future will convey how the choices Sun Ra made during his life in creating a bold vision of a Black space age future, self-publishing virtually his entire artistic output, and in making his own feature length film (*Space is the Place*), while leaving him with few financial resources, have fueled today’s Afrofuturist explosion in music, film, poetry, fashion and the visual arts.

Above all, *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* is a documentary about Sun Ra's gift to all who have come after – the gift of possibility. *Come my brothers out into the blackness of outer space, he wrote, there is no limit to the things you can be.*

C. Humanities content

Sun Ra's vision of Black-ness was a cultural alternative to racial politics.

Many people associate Sun Ra with far-out music, elaborate costumes, and outer space. But thanks to our Humanities Scholar, John Szwed's, masterful 1995 *Space is the Place: The Life and Times of Sun Ra* and the generation of scholarship that followed, we can now see Sun Ra's life and self-created persona as a profoundly deep, original, and complex approach to addressing his own lived experience as a Black man growing up in segregated America.

Born in 1914, he was raised in the separate Black world to which he was restricted in Jim Crow-era Birmingham, Alabama. Drafted for World War II he refused military service and was imprisoned, an experience that convinced him that it wasn't ...*even remotely possible that any white man can ever be expected to deal fairly with my race.* Migrating to Chicago, where he legally changed his name, he was both a part of and apart from Black Nationalist currents running through that city, debating the Nation of Islam in Lincoln Park but never joining them. Instead, Sun Ra drew on the ancient past as represented by Egypt and Ethiopia, mysticism, theosophy, biblical studies, and his fascination with the potential represented by the dawning of the space age to create a vision of other worlds better than this one.

A Black man proclaiming himself to be an alien from Saturn, Sun Ra employed the concept of "alien" to refer not only to outer space beings but the history of Black people as he once wrote:

*You ancestors didn't enter this country legally
Your ancestors didn't leave Africa legally
That is why you have no legal status here
Might as well say you are from Saturn
Who can prove that you are not
Who can prove that your ancestors didn't come from Mars, Venus, Neptune and Pluto too...
Let them prove you aren't from outerspace.*

But rather than cast this as a history of irreparable harm, Sun Ra transformed it into an asset. By not having been considered "human," Black people are "myths," and in Sun Ra's self-created cosmology, myth is the source of both enlightenment and power in what he calls... *the totality of all the universes, the omniverse.* As performance studies scholar Jayna Brown writes: *Untethered from human laws, with "the freedom not to be," Black people have privileged access to the omniverse.*

Throughout his life he was remarkably faithful to this vision, even in politicized 1960s New York where he was seen as spiritual advisor to the Black Arts Movement, described by scholar Larry Neal as the "aesthetic and spiritual sister of Black Power." In the opening essay to Volume 1 of the Black Arts Movement's short-lived journal, *The Cricket*, Sun Ra wrote: *Some people are of this world, others are not,* clearly situating himself in the latter category. Yet, the "other worlds" of which Sun Ra spoke (and from where he claimed to have come) can, themselves, be seen as a metaphor. For Sun Ra, the other worlds beyond this planet are not only better, but possible. The first step to creating a better world is to imagine it and the imagining has a liberatory effect on the present.

It is also important to remember that Sun Ra, during the height of the civil rights movement, was older—he was 46 in 1960--than his many band members and the activists and intellectuals around him. He was in some ways a traditional, Southern Baptist patriarch, who had spent the first third of his life in Birmingham, Alabama. And he ran his band, the Arkestra, as a disciplinarian, with marathon rehearsals, and strict house rules that forbade women and drugs on the premises.

The combination of his formative experiences, chosen medium of communication (music), and cosmic vision put Sun Ra at odds with civil rights activists over the question of *freedom*. For Sun Ra “discipline” was the highest virtue, higher even than “freedom.” His emphasis on discipline clearly comes from his experience as a trained professional musician and band leader as well as from his upbringing in Birmingham. But it also comes from his extensive reading of scientific, religious, and historical books, all of which were the products of disciplined minds. *The highest aspirations for man on earth is freedom. Astro-Infinity music is beyond freedom. It is precision and discipline. It is not just freedom. It is coordination and sound interdependence. It is the design of another world.*

As Jayna Brown writes ... *Ra reached through his poetry, music, and performance for a utopianism that helps us recalibrate, or expand, conventional models of black political radicalism.* His life, vision and artistic output were a continuous process of defining “Black-ness.” *My kingdom is the kingdom of darkness and blackness, and none can enter except those who are of the black spirit.* In a profoundly radical way, his vision of Black-ness, was not so much about race as it was beyond it.

The transformation of Herman Poole Blount into Sun Ra is a remarkable feat of human agency.

A Black boy, living in the Jim Crow South, and raised in a fatherless home, was more likely to conform to the structures and limited horizons that confined him than to forge a unique, individual path for himself. Instead, Herman discovered his genius for music and capacity for leadership, voraciously read everything his schoolteachers gave him, refused to serve in WWII, and discovered his philosophical comrades in Chicago where he legally named the person he had become, “Le Sony’r Ra,” more commonly known as Sun Ra. From a relatively early age he felt a yearning to understand the existential questions of life, and a calling that was crystallized in what would now be considered an alien abduction vision that he experienced in college. That calling empowered him and set him on a lifelong mission to show people that better worlds were possible through his music.

He was also resolutely his own person, until the very end. Sun Ra was not merely a stage act; it was his full-time identity. The legendary marathon Arkestra rehearsals were not just about harmony, half-tones and rhythmic invention, they were also opportunities to lecture the band about ancient history, the Bible, philosophy, and their mission to convey... *the blueprint for another kind of world.* Sun Ra dressed in flowing robes, amulets, and space gear on the street, in an ice cream parlor, or stopping at a Texas roadhouse at 1:00 AM after a long show. He created one of the first Black and artist-owned record companies, self-published his own music and poetry, gave interviews to whoever would listen, kept up a relentless touring schedule, and made his own film, *Space is the Place*.

Sun Ra rose out of Jim Crow America like a phoenix from the ashes, as a completely original, *Astro-Black* (the title of Sun Ra song we will feature in our film) being. And it is precisely this agency and the courage it took that inspires today’s generation of Afrofuturists. For them, Sun

Ra, is a kind of poet-warrior, who dedicated his life as a Black American to showing that he had the right to imagine a better future and the mission to bring others along with him.

For Sun Ra, mythmaking was an essential political act.

Of the many names Sun Ra used for his band one of the most frequent was *Sun Ra and His Myth-Science Arkestra*. Myth sits at the core of Sun Ra's self-created cosmology. *I really prefer mythocracy to democracy. Before history. Anything before history is myth... That's where Black people are. Reality equals death because everything which is real has a beginning and an end. Myth speaks of the impossible, of immortality. And since everything possible has been tried, we need to try the impossible.* In Sun Ra's world, as our humanities scholar Brent Edward Hayes writes: *Black people are mythic, ancient, or cosmic. They are the race for space.*

In an interview for Detroit Black Journal, Sun Ra talked about how the white race had built... *all this technology and all these things* upon what he labels... *the myth of white supremacy*. He goes on to say that *white supremacy is, of course, a lie. However, Black people have got a lot of things that are true, but they got nothing to show for it.* Sun Ra saw myth as something more powerful than truth and mythmaking was Sun Ra's version of a political act. It was a means to reclaim Black history while charting a course for the Black future.

Sun Ra can be seen as part of a tradition of Black visionaries that includes Nat Turner, Rebecca Jackson, Robert Johnson, Marcus Garvey and musicians like Ornette Coleman. But while other artists, white and Black, have engaged in self-mythologizing, none have taken it to the extremes of Sun Ra. Many of his live cosmo drama shows opened with Sun Ra's grand entrance to the members of the Arkestra singing:

*When the world was in darkness
And darkness was ignorance
Along came Ra
The living myth
The living mystery*

Writer and scholar, Namwali Serpell poses and answers the question so many have raised: *Did Sun Ra truly believe he had once been transmolecularized to Saturn? Did he really want to save black people by sending them to outer space? Was he some kind of intergalactic Marcus Garvey, who sold tickets back to Africa but never set sail? Was he pulling an elaborate prank? Does it matter? Sun Ra never broke character, never said "it was all a joke" or "it was just a scam" or "this world has made me mad." With his strategic omissions, he turned a "nigger" [as he was called by an Alabama judge] into "a colored intellectual" into a god; alchemized gold out of thin air; became a tall story, a living myth, a human among humans, a kindly prism.*

By living inside the myth he had so carefully created, Sun Ra attempted to break through the limits of what can be imagined and challenge mankind to rethink its destiny.

While reaching for the "omniversal," Sun Ra's vision was firmly rooted in the most American of art forms, jazz music.

To the extent that Sun Ra is seen as American, it is because of his connection to that quintessential American art form, jazz, and especially his passion for its entire history as reflected in his style and performances. His band, which was with very few exceptions a large ensemble of highly talented Black musicians, dancers, singers, and performers, was seen as

representing Black excellence, essence, and imagination. At a time of Black power movements, decolonialization, and Pan-Africanism, Sun Ra and his Arkestra were part of defining Blackness, though in a way that was more transcendental than purely political.

In 1969 Esquire magazine invited a long list of contemporary figures to suggest proclamations for astronaut Neil Armstrong when first setting foot on the moon. Somehow, Sun Ra found himself among Muhammad Ali, Nabokov, Ferlinghetti, Ed Koch, Timothy Leary, William Safire, John Kenneth Galbraith, et al, but unlike the others, did not project American or even earthly concerns:

*Reality has touched against myth
Humanity can move to achieve the impossible
Because when you've achieved one impossible the others
Come together to be with their brother, the first impossible
Borrowed from the rim of the myth
Happy Space Age to you...*

Instead, Sun Ra positions himself on a higher plane, choosing to see the lunar landing, not as a national project, but as taking *all of humanity* a step closer to understanding the power of myth and the imperative of achieving the impossible. He encompasses James Baldwin's plea in *The Fire Next Time: I know that what I am asking is impossible. But in our time, as in every time, the impossible is the least one can demand.* But Sun Ra goes beyond it to paint, as he would say, "pictures of infinity," transcending nation and race, to achieve the first of all the "impossibles" required to create better worlds.

Sun Ra was frequently asked to talk about how music is a universal language to which he often replied *cosmic music is a cosmic language that... speaks to the worlds of the greater potentials awaiting the peoples of the worlds at every future point on every future plane.* He could never be accused of being nationalistic. Sun Ra's smallest unit of analysis was a world, and his largest, the omniverse.

Sun Ra and Afrofuturists put technology—ancient and future--in the hands of Black people.

One of the earliest Afrofuturist films, *The Last Angel of History* (1996), follows the journey of the "Data Thief," who must travel across time and space in search of a crossroads where he makes archaeological digs for fragments of history and technology whose code holds the key to his future. Along the way he encounters the legend of bluesman, Robert Johnson, who at his own crossroads sold his soul to the devil in exchange for an "ancient technology called the blues." The film also describes the drum as a technology capable of communicating both across the African diaspora and across time. More recent films like *Black Panther* and *Neptune Frost* portray Africa as the source of technological innovation that could help humanity if only it can be safeguarded against those in other parts of the world who would abuse it.

As a boy Sun Ra was fascinated with technology and managed to buy one of the first electronic keyboards, the Hammond Solovox. He went on to acquire a full arsenal of the latest keyboards, especially the Moog synthesizer, which he was the first to record in a jazz setting. In his film *Space is the Place*, he can be seen piloting a spacecraft propelled by music, with a Minimoog for a control panel. On stage he was often surrounded by a phalanx of synthesizers and electronic keyboards with an acoustic piano at the center.

His belief in the promise of the space age was based, in part, on the promise of technology. Through his own voracious reading he had picked up concepts from quantum physics and liberally used terms like “isotope teleportation” and “transmolecularization.” But Sun Ra was also quick to warn about the danger of technology when used by the wrong hands for bad purposes. One of his most famous vocal numbers, the jaunty “Nuclear War,” mocks a planet which has developed a technology so monstrous as to guarantee extinction and challenges the audience to do something about it in no uncertain terms:

*If they push that button
Your ass got to go!
What'cha gonna do?
Without your ass?*

Above all Sun Ra believed that technology could be capable of unimaginable achievements if only the world had the will to try...*if you can develop an atomic bomb, I'm sure you can develop and alter destiny.*

Sun Ra and Afrofuturists are time travelers.

In his book *Eulogies*, Amiri Baraka wrote *Sun Ra's consistent statement, musically and spoken is that this is a primitive world... That's why Sun Ra returned only to say he left. Into the Future, into Space.* Sun Ra was a time traveler.

Musicians live in a world of time punctuated by rhythm, overtones, semitones and sixteenth notes. And there are fascinating home movies of Sun Ra painstakingly rehearsing members of the Arkestra so that they learn to play *ahead* of the beat. A Sun Ra Arkestra performance could be like a crash course in the history of jazz, including some of the most avant-garde music ever heard, together with Fletcher Henderson, African percussion, frightening synthesizer solos, and musicians parading through the audience like a Baptist church service. Unlike jazz musicians such as Miles Davis who, in the search for the new, hardly ever returned to his old material, Sun Ra saw his own music and jazz itself along a continuum, in which the music of the past contained the building blocks of the future, and new music had to embrace the old.

But Sun Ra ventured far beyond the microworld of musical time when he reached back to ancient Egypt and forward into the omniverse to forge his cosmo-vision of a Black space age future. In doing so he collapsed thousands of years of history into a living stream between the past, present, and future. Or in Ra's own words *...the first thing to do is to consider time officially ended. We work on the other side of time.* Like Sun Ra, today's Afrofuturists bring forward the heritage of ancient Black civilizations while imagining the technology of the future; the ancient weapon made of vibranium that powers Wakanda's spaceships. One approach, Black Quantum Futurism, *...derives its facets, tenets, and qualities from quantum physics and Black/African cultural traditions of consciousness, time, and space.* Early in 2022, Black Quantum Futurism held a major conference at New York's New School for Social Research on the theme *Time Zone Protocols.* Afrofuturists also work on the other side of time.

D. Creative approach

Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism will be a 90-minute documentary film that unfolds without narration so that audiences can directly experience the energy of Afrofuturism and the creative power of Sun Ra himself. Sun Ra took pride in the fact that he was “self-underground,” outside the mainstream publishing industry, which he saw as anathema to the freedom essential to his self-proclaimed mission of *saving the world through my music.* Moreover, Sun Ra's elocutionary

style was rarely biographic, purposely elliptical, and almost never succinct. Notwithstanding, there is no lack of raw material with which to make a film about Sun Ra and his influence on Afrofuturism.

Sun Ra was compulsive about recording virtually all his Arkestra's rehearsals and live performances and self-publishing as much of it as possible. Fortunately, much of this material has been preserved, continues to be digitally re-mastered, and is available for licensing through Sun Ra, LLC, which supports our documentary project. We have access to his self-published broadsides and poetry through representatives of the estate as well. Sun Ra was also loquacious and gave a considerable number of television and radio interviews in the U.S. and abroad, in addition to underground tapes of conversations, some of which are found in archives and still others in obscure corners of the internet. There are two major archival collections devoted to Sun Ra: *The Alton Abraham Collection of Sun Ra* at the University of Chicago and the newly established *Sun Ra Archiv Geerken* at the JazzInstitut in Darmstadt, Germany. Smaller Sun Ra-related archives can be found at Northwestern University (IL), Hamilton College (NY), the Berklee School of Music (MA) and the Institute for Jazz Studies at Rutgers University (NJ).

A considerable number of complete or partial shows of the Sun Ra Arkestra were filmed for television during the 70, 80s, and early 90s, while Sun Ra was still on this planet in addition to performances of the present-day Arkestra under the direction of Marshall Allen. Two feature length films also provide important material: Robert Mugge's 1980 documentary, *A joyful Noise* and *Space is the Place*, a 1972 feature directed by John Coney and written by Sun Ra himself. A third 58' documentary, *Sun Ra - Brother From Another Planet*, produced by Don Lets for BBC covers some of the same biographical material as our film, but takes less of a humanities approach, particularly concerning Sun Ra's views on racism and Black-ness. Moreover, because it was released in 2005, it does not capture the Afrofuturist explosion inspired by Sun Ra's life and work. The first filmed images of the Sun Ra Arkestra (c 1959) are included in Ed Bland's *The Cry of Jazz*, and we have also obtained permission to use *The Magic Sun*, an avant-garde experimental film made in 1966 by Phill Niblock. Finally, the Sun Ra Arkestra has always been a visual experience and there is a considerable reserve of high-quality still images available from photographers including Ming Smith, Marilyn Nance, Lee Santa, Lenny Sinclair, Jan Persson, and others.

By carefully blending these sources we will tell the story of *Sun Ra and the Birth of Afrofuturism*. Archival interviews and new interviews with past and present members of the Sun Ra Arkestra, other artists, and scholars will play a critical role in conveying that story. Music, of course, will be a driving force and we will face the challenge of reducing the vast musical output of Sun Ra into representative samples used at critical moments throughout the film. In this regard, our project team has a deep knowledge of all phases of Sun Ra's music. For the Afrofuturist music produced since Sun Ra's "earth departure day" in 1993 through to the present, we will supplement our own knowledge with that of our humanities scholars.

E. Rights and permissions

Sun Ra's discography spans a formidable 847 pages, covering more than 1,000 individual compositions, 100 LP recordings, and a significant number of singles. The music rights are owned by Sun Ra LLC (Thomas Jenkins Jr., a son of Sun Ra's sister), published by Enterplanetary Concepts (a BMI Company), and administered by Irwin Chusid. In a letter included in Attachment 6 of this proposal Chusid states: *As rightsholders, Sun Ra LLC can and will issue licenses for the use in the film of Sun Ra's recorded and visual works, including Saturn*

Records album art and footage from the motion picture Space is the Place. We will extend all resources at our disposal in order to help achieve the success of Mr. Nelson's project. The “non-music” part of the estate is owned by Sun Ra LLC and administered by John Corbett. Based on conversations with Mr. Corbett, we do not anticipate difficulties in licensing this material. Firelight Media and American Masters are highly experienced in licensing matters and, most of all, are trusted by licensors. Beyond the materials controlled by Sun Ra LLC, we also anticipate the need to license interview and concert footage from foreign television producers, segments of independent films, still photographs, in addition to rights related to present-day Afrofuturist performers. *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* estimates that all necessary rights can be cleared for \$200,000.

F. Humanities Scholars

The Humanities Scholars whose input will help shape *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* include Sun Ra’s biographer, others who have written books devoted exclusively to Sun Ra and his influence, together with those who are experts on specific aspects of his work and African American history and thought more generally.

Brent Hayes Edwards is the Peng Family Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. His research interests include African American and African Diaspora studies, Jazz Studies, Twentieth Century Poetry, and Black Radical Historiography. He is the author of *Epistrophies: Jazz and the Literary Imagination* (Harvard University Press, 2017), which won the 2018 ASCAP Foundation Virgil Thomson Award for Outstanding Music Criticism as well as the 2019 Truman Capote Award for Literary Criticism. Edwards received both his Master of Arts and Ph.D. from Columbia University. We will look to Prof. Edwards for his expertise on Sun Ra’s poetry and its influence on the Black Arts movement of the 1960s and 70s

Earl Lewis is the Thomas C. Holt Distinguished University Professor of History, Afroamerican and African Studies, and public policy at the University of Michigan where he also founded the Center for Social Solutions. As a scholar and leader in higher education and philanthropy, he has examined and addressed critical questions including the role of race in American history, diversity, equity and inclusion, graduate education, humanities scholarship, and universities and their larger communities. A frequent lecturer, he has authored or edited nine books, scores of essays, articles and comments. Lewis graduated from Concordia College-Moorhead, earned his Ph.D. in history from the University of Minnesota, and is the recipient of eleven honorary degrees. His expertise will help us to situate Sun Ra in the broader context of African American history and thought.

Thomas Stanley is Assistant Professor of Aesthetics, Critical Theory in Visual Arts, Sound Art at George Mason University. Stanley is an artist, author, and activist deeply committed to audio culture in the service of personal growth and social change. In 2014 he authored the *Execution of Sun Ra*, “a critical response to the cosmological prognostications of the late jazz iconoclast.” Dr. Stanley has spent three decades exploring the ramifications of Alter Destiny, Sun Ra’s unique construct for a just and sustainable AfroFuture. He has also written and lectured extensively on emergent musical cultures and is co-author of *George Clinton and P-Funk: An Oral History*. Stanley received his B.A. from Brown University and his Ph.D. in Musicology and Ethnomusicology from the University of Maryland. We will look to Stanley for insight into the core concepts of Sun Ra’s cosmology as well as his advice on music technology and present-day Afrofuturist artists influenced by Sun Ra.

John Szwed is Adjunct Senior Research Scholar, Columbia University where he previously served as Professor of Music and Jazz Studies Emeritus and the Louis Armstrong Professor of Jazz Studies. Prior to Columbia he was the John M. Musser Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, African American Studies, American Studies, and Film Studies at Yale University. Szwed has written numerous books and articles, including biographies of Alan Lomax, Billie Holiday, Miles Davis and was awarded a Grammy in 2005 for *Doctor Jazz*, a book included with *Jelly Roll Morton: The Complete Library of Congress Recordings*. Szwed's masterful biography, *Space is the Place: The Life and times of Sun Ra* is widely considered to be the book on Sun Ra. We will look to him for valuable insight into the first third of Sun Ra's life in Birmingham, Alabama, a history previously shrouded in mystery until unlocked by Szwed's deep research and interviews.

Paul Youngquist is Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Colorado and author of *A Pure Solar World: Sun Ra and the Birth of Afrofuturism*. His research focuses on relations between European and African cultures in the late eighteenth-century mixing archival and theoretical resources with fieldwork to examine the role dislocated Africans play in the economic and cultural production of late eighteenth-century cultures. He is particularly interested in the history and culture of Jamaica's Maroons and in contemporary science fiction as a mode of vernacular cultural critique, Afrofuturism, and the music of Sun Ra. He is currently working on a book about jazz drummer Jimmy Hopps, who worked extensively with Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Pharoah Sanders. Prof. Youngquist will provide important insight into the early development of Sun Ra's Afrofuturist vision during the crucial years he spent in Chicago.

Note to the reader: Jazz scholarship, like jazz music itself, suffers from an over-representation of male professionals. Given the role of women in Sun Ra's Arkestra and the significant number of female Afrofuturist writers, musicians and poets he has inspired, we are reaching out to a number of important female scholars to get their input on the film. These include (b) (6)

Works by both authors are included in Attachment 5: Bibliography. Though not intended to serve as a humanities scholar, we have also been working with **Cheryl Banks-Smith**, professor of dance at Pasadena City College, who performed with Sun Ra from 1971 into the 1980s. Banks-Smith, who we plan to interview in the film, has shared her experience as a female artist inside the Sun Ra's Arkestra, and his influence on the inter-arts collaborations in which she has participated in her long career working with Cecil Taylor, Dianne McIntyre, Butch Morris, Peter Kowald and as part of the JAM laboratory. Brown, Serpell and Banks-Smith are all quoted in the narrative and treatment for *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*.

G. Media team

Stanley Nelson (Executive Producer) is among the most celebrated documentary filmmakers working today. His feature-length films combine compelling narratives with rich and deeply researched historical detail, shining new light on both familiar and under-explored aspects of the American past. In addition to honors for his individual films, Nelson and his body of work have garnered every major award in the industry. He is a MacArthur "Genius" Fellow and was awarded an individual Peabody Award (2016), a Lifetime Emmy (2016), and the National Medal in the Humanities (2015). His most recent films include *Becoming Frederick Douglass* and *Harriet Tubman: Visions of Freedom*. Nelson's 2021 documentary, *Attica*, was nominated for an Academy Award. *Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool*, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2019, marking Nelson's tenth premiere at Sundance, and went on to garner 2 Emmy Awards.

Nelson's approach of going where the research leads has enabled him to produce some 30 penetrating films about subjects including the Black Panthers, Marcus Garvey, Jonestown, and NFL quarterback Michael Vick.

Christine Turner (Director/Producer) is a filmmaker in New York who spotlights tender, intimate portraits of people in socially charged landscapes. Her latest short film, *Lynching Postcards: "Token of a Great Day* (Paramount+), was nominated for a Peabody, shortlisted for an Oscar and won an NAACP Image Award. Previously, Christine directed the critically acclaimed documentary *Homegoings*, about a renowned funeral director in Harlem. Now streaming on the Criterion Channel, the film premiered at Documentary Fortnight at MoMA and aired on the PBS series POV. Other projects include the Sundance selection, *Betye Saar: Taking Care of Business* (New York Times Op-Docs) and Tribeca's *Paint & Pitchfork* (The New Yorker) about celebrated artists Amy Sherald and Kehinde Wiley. Christine also collaborates on non-fiction series and documentary specials for broadcast and streaming. She is a 2022 Concordia Fellow and recently completed a feature film through her company Peralta Pictures which will premiere on American Masters, as well as projects for Story Syndicate and One Story Up.

Michael Kantor (Co-Executive Producer) has served as Executive Producer of PBS' *American Masters* documentary series since 2014. Kantor's more than 30 years' experience in historical documentary filmmaking includes the six-part Emmy nominated series, *Make 'em Laugh: The Funny Business of America*, *Give Me the Banjo* (narrated by Steve Martin), and *Quincy Jones: In the Pocket*, and *Sammy Davis, Jr: I've Gotta Be Me* for the American Masters series. He has also created profiles of Arthur Miller and David Mamet for Thirteen's series *Egg: The Arts Show*, and co-directed *Cornerstone: An Interstate Adventure* for HBO. Kantor's other credits include work on *The West*, a film by Stephen Ives (Executive Producer Ken Burns), *Margaret Sanger*, *The Impressionists*, and Ric Burns' *New York: A Documentary History*. He has received seven Primetime Emmy awards and a Peabody for *Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise* (2016).

Marcia Smith (President, Firelight Media) is president of Firelight Media, which produces documentary films, provides artistic and financial support to emerging filmmakers of color, and builds impact campaigns to connect documentaries to audiences and social justice advocates. Under her leadership, Firelight Media was honored with a MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions. Firelight Media's flagship Documentary Lab and other programs have supported more than 200 emerging filmmakers over the past two decades, who have premiered at festivals such as Sundance, and gone on to earn numerous awards. Marcia won the Writers' Guild Award for best nonfiction writing for her work on *The Murder of Emmett Till*, the 2019 Luminary Award from BlackStar Film Festival and an Emmy for *Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool* (2020). Marcia is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the Peabody Board of Directors, and the board of the International Documentary Association.

Bradford Smith (Writer/Researchers) has been listening to, following, and researching Sun Ra and the Arkestra since the early 1970s. His long career has combined passion for jazz with commitment to social justice. Smith served as Vice President for Peace and Social Justice at the Ford Foundation, President of the Oak Foundation (Geneva, Switzerland) and most recently as President of Candid, the world's largest source of data and information on nonprofits and philanthropy. He serves on the boards of the International Center for Transitional Justice, the Tinker Foundation, and Arts for Art, a nonprofit "...dedicated to the exceptional creativity that originated in the African American multi-arts jazz culture." For the past 26 years, Arts for Art has honored that culture through its annual Vision Festival featuring the Sun Ra Arkestra and musicians like Andrew Cyrille, David Ware, William Parker, Amina Claudine Myers and Angela

Sanchez. He holds degrees in Music History and Musicology, and Economics and is currently a Visiting Professional at University of Michigan's Center for Social Solutions.

H. Progress

Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism was born out of conversations between Firelight Media and Brad Smith beginning in 2019, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Firelight had a long, established track record of making award-winning documentaries about the Black experience and in training a new generation of filmmakers of color. At the time, Firelight had completed *Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool*, which garnered two Emmy awards, and went on to make *Attica*, which was nominated for a 2022 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature Film. Though Sun Ra's "earth departure day" had occurred nearly 30 years ago, interest in the movement he inspired, Afrofuturism, was exploding, with hit movies like *Black Panther*, award-winning television series like *Lovecraft Country*, and Carnegie Hall's 2022 Afrofuturism Festival with some 50 citywide events. The time had come to make our documentary.

Research

Sun Ra was remarkably creative and prolific, though he saw himself as "self-underground," with much of his work self-published by his own companies. And, like many jazz musicians, his business affairs were filled with verbal agreements, faulty contracts, and bootleg records. As a result, much of last three years have been spent collecting scholarly works, interviews, recordings, live footage, photographs, paraphernalia, and other material from archives, university libraries, obscure corners of the internet and through personal conversation. We have registered with two major archives—one at the University of Chicago and one at the JazzInstitut in Darmstadt, Germany with large bodies of Sun Ra material and reviewed lists of their holdings. Two smaller archives, located at the Berklee College of Music and Northwestern University are devoted to the life and work of Pat Patrick, long time Sun Ra Arkestra musician, and son of former governor Deval Patrick (MA). John Szwed has placed material used for his pioneering biography *Space is the Place: The Life and Times of Sun Ra* with Rutgers' Institute of Jazz Studies. We are currently assessing the quality of Szwed's taped interviews with Sun Ra. Finally, we have examined a small collection of booklets, interviews and pamphlets published by the Hinds brothers as part of their own *Sun Ra Research* oral history project in the late 1990s and digitized by Hamilton College in the "Communal Societies" archive. We have also collected a large body of material about Afrofuturism, especially concerning modern-day musicians, writers, and filmmakers who have been influenced by Sun Ra.

Rights

Having completed the initial research phase of the project, we established relationships with the legal representatives of Sun Ra, LLC (his lawful heirs and beneficiaries). They have done a remarkable job in gaining control over the lion's share of Sun Ra's vast artistic output, including portions that were previously claimed by European individuals or companies. Sun Ra LLC fully supports the film and stands ready to provide whatever licenses we require of Sun Ra's recorded and visual works (see support letter in Attachment 6).

Humanities Scholars

We have assembled a team of humanities scholars for the project including John Szwed, Sun Ra's only biographer, and scholars who represent diverse areas of expertise relevant to *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*. These include, African American history, electronic music, performance, literature and Afrofuturism, itself. Several of these scholars interviewed Sun Ra while he was living and know former or actual members of the Arkestra. More information about

our humanities scholars can be found in Section F of this narrative and in their support letters (Attachment 6).

Production team

We have formed the core production team for *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*, composed of Executive Producer and Firelight Media founder, Stanley Nelson, Director/Producer, Christine Turner, Firelight President, Marcia Smith, and Writer/Researcher, Bradford Smith. Michael Kantor, Executive Producer of PBS/American Masters, which plans to make this film part of American Masters series, will enter as co-Executive Producer of *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*. We are also in conversation with editors, archivists, and others who will be part of the production team.

Interviews

The Sun Ra Arkestra continues to perform, currently under the leadership of Marshall Allen, who joined the band in 1957. Because of Allen's advanced age (he turned 98 in 2022) Stanley Nelson filmed a long interview with him in 2021 at the Sun Ra House in Philadelphia. This is a key interview for the film given Allen's unique insider view of Sun Ra's work and his collaborations with many of today's leading Afrofuturist artists.

Pre-interviews

We have conducted pre-interviews with a considerable number of people who will be important to telling the story of *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*. Apart from our Humanities Scholars, these include:

Ahmed Abdullah, trumpet/flugelhorn, Professor of Jazz at The New School, performed with Sun Ra Arkestra for 20 years starting in 1975

Cheryl Banks-Smith, Professor of Dance at Pasadena Community College, danced and sang with the Sun Ra Arkestra from 1971 through the late 1980s

Rodrigo Brandão, Brazilian hip-hop artist, who has performed and recorded with the Sun Ra Arkestra

Jayna Brown, Chair of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies at Brown University, author of *Black Utopias: Speculative Life and the Music of Other Worlds*

Irwin Chusid, Executive Administrator of Sun Ra, LLC

John Corbett, co-owner of Corbett vs. Dempsey gallery in Chicago, professor, curator, author and editor of publications on Sun Ra and re-editions of his written works.

Marc Hannaford, Associate Professor of Music Theory, University of Michigan focused on jazz, improvisation and identity.

Craig Harris, trombonist, played with Sun Ra in the 1970s and accompanied the Arkestra on their trip to Nigeria for FESTAC '77

Burgin Matthews, local Birmingham researcher, author of *Doc: The Story of a Birmingham Jazz Man*

Elson Nascimento, percussionist, joined the Sun Ra Arkestra while Sun Ra was still alive in 1988 and continues to perform with Arkestra today.

Phill Niblock, filmmaker, composer, director of the film *The Magic Sun* (1966)

Herb Taylor, host of *Brother Ah's Collectors* on WPFW-FM who met Sun Ra through his Chicago business partner Alton Abraham

Shawn Tyson-Ramirez, daughter of Sun Ra Arkestra lead vocalist June Tyson

Alex Zamalin, author of *Black Utopia: The History of an Idea From Black Nationalism to Afrofuturism*

We now seek a grant from NEH to move into the production phase of the project.

I. Distribution plan and audiences

Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism will air on PBS' *American Masters* Series guaranteeing national distribution across the broad network of 350 public television affiliates with the potential to reach one million viewers. *American Masters* has long-established success in the broadcast arena and high audience loyalty. Moreover, the PBS/*American Masters* website and their social media like YouTube, together with streaming opportunities on other platforms, ensure that the *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* will be seen by a large audience. Given that Sun Ra's life and work gave birth to a vibrant movement with big-name artists like Solange, Janelle Monae and Kamasi Washington, in addition to blockbuster films like *Black Panther*, we anticipate a broader audience than might otherwise be expected for a documentary about a historic jazz musician.

For a film like this we are interested not just in raw audience numbers but also reaching a diverse public. Firelight Media is specialized in telling untold stories of the Black experience and has trained more scores of filmmakers of color around the world, including our Director, Christine Turner. Firelight will use its own networks and social media platforms to reach audiences that might not otherwise be reached by our partner *American Masters*. Moreover, Firelight has a superb track record of placing its films at major festivals and in more intimate screenings around the country, which provide the opportunity for audience members to meet with the production team and people featured in the film.

We expect *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* to generate debate in conferences and workshops about identity and racial equity in imagining, planning and building for the future. Furthermore, given the diversity, nature, and vibrancy of the Afrofuturism movement, we also envision live events. These could include concerts, art exhibits, seminars, even fashion shows that honor Afrofuturism's roots as embodied in our film while showcasing the evolution and creative force of the movement today. And the Sun Ra Arkestra itself, one of the world's longest, continuously performing, jazz big bands will be a powerful force for multimedia events related to the film.

Finally, we believe there are opportunities for *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*, to garner international interest given the fact that the Sun Ra Arkestra under Sun Ra, and today, under the direction of Marshall Allen, has a considerable following in Europe and elsewhere in the world. We will be using footage of concert performances from those countries and there is potential for the kinds of live events described above. Afrofuturist cinema--of which Sun Ra's own film, *Space is the Place*, is the pioneer--is booming in countries like Brazil and parts of Africa, which offers additional opportunities for festivals, screenings and workshops.

Note to the reader: Our request to NEH is only for production of the film *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*. The festivals, concerts, workshops, multi-arts, and international activities above will be funded through partnerships with diverse organizations and our own resources.

J. Fundraising plan and project costs

The overall budget for production of *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* is projected to be \$1.5 million. We seek \$700,000 in production funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

In addition to pre-production grants awarded by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust, we anticipate that the remainder of the funding will be provided by

The Ford Foundation, Open Society Foundations, and PBS/American Masters (see Michael Kantor letter in Attachment 6). Firelight Media has received close to 100 grants from 36 different foundations over the past 15 years. Firelight's President, Marcia Smith, and our media team have deep experience working for and with philanthropic foundations as well as with other funding sources.

Finally, pre-sales to both domestic and international distributors will be allocated to production costs, as necessary.

K. Organization profile

Firelight Media's mission is to produce high-quality non-fiction content; develop and support diverse, independent media makers who tell compelling nonfiction stories about people, cultures and issues underrepresented in the mainstream; and build audiences by creating tools, materials, and campaigns to maximize the impact of non-fiction media. Firelight was founded in 2000 by veteran filmmaker and MacArthur "Genius" Fellow, Stanley Nelson, and award-winning writer and philanthropy executive, Marcia Smith, in response to the deficit of diverse voices in the mainstream media. Over twenty years, Firelight has created pathways for underrepresented stories to be told by strengthening the pipeline of talented filmmakers of color and by producing, supporting, and amplifying high-quality, powerful social-issue documentaries. Firelight's programs, including its Documentary Lab, have trained and supported more than 200 documentary filmmakers in the United States and around the world. Firelight's films, principally produced by National Humanities Medalist, Lifetime Emmy winner, and MacArthur "Genius" Fellow Stanley Nelson, have become primary source materials. Firelight has produced over 30 hours of primetime programming for public television, and has won every major industry award, including multiple Primetime Emmys, du-Pont Columbia Silver Batons, Peabodys, International Documentary Association Awards, and numerous festival awards. Firelight's 2021 *Attica* was nominated for an Academy Award in the Best Documentary Category.

Firelight will oversee all aspects of *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*, with Stanley Nelson acting as Executive Producer. In doing so we will partner with *American Masters* (PBS) whose chief executive, Michael Kantor, will participate as Co-Executive Producer. Now in its 36th season on PBS, *American Masters* illuminates the lives and creative journeys of our nation's most enduring artistic giants—those who have left an indelible impression on our cultural landscape—through compelling, unvarnished stories. The time is right for Sun Ra to take his place among the distinguished cohort of American Masters.

Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism Work Plan

Prior to the start of the NEH grant period, the team will complete fundraising and the research and development phase of the project, including assembling additional key individuals for the production team, specifying the production schedule, conducting pre-interviews and securing insurance.

February 2023 - September 2023 Pre Production (Not covered by NEH funding)

- Sun Ra Estate Rights secured
- Selected interviews completed (older members of band and key scholars)
- Production funds secured
- Archivist/Associate Producer hired
- Archival material identified, logged
- Interviewees identified
- Shooting schedule developed

October 2023 - January 2024 - Production

- Interviews conducted
- Script finalized
- Archival research continues
- Interviews transcribed
- Original footage logged and digitized
- Prep for edit

January 2024 - April 2024 - Post Production Phase 1, Rough Cut

- Editing to rough cut
- Composer hired
- Continue archival research
- Rough narration written and recorded
- Shoot still images

April 2024 - July 2024 - Post Production Phase 2, Fine Cut

- Offline edit to fine cut
- Advisor/consultant screenings
- Complete archival research
- Complete animation of graphics and still images
- Record narration

August 2024 - October 2024 - Post Production Phase 3, Final Cut

- Offline edit to picture lock, color correction
- Narration pick-up recording
- Music finalized and recorded
- Masters delivered

Attachment 3: Detailed Treatment
Telling the Story of *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*

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Attachment 4: Description of Work Sample

Description:

Directed and Produced by Christine Turner and Executive Produced by Stanley Nelson and Marcia Smith, *J'Nai Bridges Unamplified*, is a documentary film that follows rising opera singer J'Nai Bridges in the lead up to the National Philharmonic's premiere of "A Knee on the Neck," a tribute to the life and legacy of George Floyd. Through the story of Bridges, the film explores the topic racial inequality in classical music and shows one artist's attempt to chart a new future for herself and for others. The film, which weaves verité footage, archival materials and sit-down interviews, will be broadcast on PBS American Masters in 2023 as part of a special entitled, "Masters in the Making."

J'Nai Bridges Unamplified

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- Wilmer, Val, *As Serious As Your Life: Black Music And The Free Jazz Revolution, 1957-1977*, (Allison & Busby Limited 1977, Serpents Tail 20180)
- Womack, Ytasha, *A Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture*, (Lawrence Hill Books, 2013)
- Youngquist, Paul, *A Pure Solar World: Sun Ra and the Birth of Afrofuturism* (University of Texas Press, 2016)
- Zamelin, Alexander, *Black Utopia: The History of an Idea from Black Nationalism to Afrofuturism* (Columbia University Press, 2018)

Attachment 6: Résumés and letters of interest or commitment

Media Team

Stanley Nelson (Executive Producer), Founder of Firelight Media and Firelight Films

Christine Turner (Director/Producer) Principal, Peralta Pictures

Michael Kantor (Co-Executive Producer), Executive Producer of *American Masters* (PBS)

Marcia Smith (President) Firelight Media

Bradford Smith (Writer/Researcher), Visiting Professional, Center for Social Solutions, University of Michigan

Humanities Scholars

Brent Hayes Edwards - Peng Family Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University

Earl Lewis - Thomas C. Holt Distinguished University Professor of History, Afroamerican and African Studies, and Public Policy at the University of Michigan

Thomas Stanley - Assistant Professor of Aesthetics, Critical Theory in Visual Arts, Sound Art at George Mason University

John Szwed - John M. Musser Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, African American Studies and Film Studies at Yale University and Adjunct Senior Research Scholar in the Center for Jazz Studies at Columbia University

Paul Youngquist – Professor of Distinction Emeritus, English Department University of Colorado, Boulder

Estate/Licensing

Irwin Chusid - Exclusive Administrator, Sun Ra LLC



Stanley Nelson Biography

Stanley Nelson is among the most decorated documentary filmmakers in history. Best known for his body of work on African American history, Nelson's films weave compelling narratives from first-person witnesses, expert observers, music, and deeply researched archival materials to shine new light on both familiar and under-explored stories of the American past.

In addition to honors for his individual films, Nelson and his body of work have garnered nearly every major award in the industry. In 2013, President Barack Obama bestowed upon him the National Medal in the Humanities. He is a MacArthur "Genius" Fellow, was awarded an individual Peabody Award, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Academy of Television Arts Sciences (the EMMYS), and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Documentary Association. Nelson has received honorary degrees from Brown University, Duke University, Morgan State University, Marymount Manhattan College and Haverford College.

Nelson's film *Attica* was nominated for the 2022 Oscar for Best Documentary. Later that year, his films *Harriet Tubman: Visions of Freedom* and *Becoming Frederick Douglass* premiered nationally on PBS, while *After Jackie* premiered on the History Channel. Other recent work also includes the 2019 *Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool*, which marked Nelson's tenth premiere at the Sundance Film Festival (the most of any documentary filmmaker) and went on to win two Emmys and a Grammy nomination after its premiere on PBS's *American Masters*. Also in 2019, Nelson released *Tulsa Burning: The 1921 Race Massacre* on the History Channel and *Crack: Cocaine, Corruption and Conspiracy* on Netflix, both which have become primary documents on these key periods in American history.

Nelson has a long history of collaboration with public television. Two of his recent films, *Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges and Universities* (2018) which chronicled the 150-year history and impact of HBCUs, and *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution* (2016), the first comprehensive feature-length documentary portrait of that iconic organization, broke audience records for African American viewership on PBS won the 2016 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Documentary Film.

Freedom Riders (2010, winner of three Primetime Emmy Awards) and *Freedom Summer* (2014, Peabody Award), took a fresh look at multiracial efforts to desegregate public facilities and register black voters in the Jim Crow South, critical events of the 1960's. *Freedom Riders* was recently inducted into the Library of Congress's National Film Registry. Nelson's 2003 film *The Murder of Emmett Till* (Sundance Special Jury Prize), about the brutal killing of a fourteen-year-old African American boy in Mississippi in 1955, uncovered new eyewitnesses to the crime, prompted the U.S. Department of Justice to reopen the case, and inspired a new wave of public attention to the incident.

Other notable films by Nelson include the Emmy-nominated *The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords* (1999), a sweeping portrait of over a century of independent black journalism; *Two Dollars and a Dream* (1989), a biography of Madame C.J. Walker, the first self-made African American woman millionaire; *Jonestown: The Life and Death of People's Temple* (2006, Tribeca Film Festival Special Jury Prize), a riveting account of cult leader Jim Jones and mass suicide/murder in a remote corner of Guyana; *Marcus Garvey: Look for Me in the Whirlwind*



(2000, Sundance Premiere) a portrait of the early 20th century black nationalist and his movement; and *A Place of Our Own* (2004, Sundance Premiere), a revealing and personal look at the upper middle-class African American community.

In addition to feature-length work, Nelson has collaborated with key public, philanthropic and corporate entities to produce short films. This work includes producing 19 video segments for the permanent exhibits of the National Museum of African American History & Culture (NMAAHC) as well as the video projection mapping of the Museum's exterior in honor of its opening, and *The Story of Access*, a short piece on how Americans of different races relate to public space, commissioned by Starbucks.

In 2000, Nelson and his wife, Marcia A. Smith, founded Firelight Media, a non-profit organization dedicated to mentoring a new generation of diverse filmmakers committed to advancing underrepresented stories. Now in its 23rd year, Firelight Media is a thriving organization that provides financial and creative support to documentary filmmakers of color at all stages of their careers and is a field-leading voice for diversity, equity, and ethics. Firelight Media has earned recognition with a MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions, as well as ongoing support from the Ford Foundation and American Rescue Plan support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Nelson acts as lead mentor for Firelight Media's programs as well as leading Firelight Films, his production company.



January 4, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter as an indication of my enthusiastic commitment to serve as Executive Producer of *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* (working title) in partnership with American Masters.

The film will for the first time trace the completely unique role of this genius musician, composer, arranger, and philosopher whose influence has only grown in the nearly 30 years since his death. The story of Sun Ra is a uniquely American story: a musical prodigy born into the Jim Crow south, who cut his teeth in black swing bands before moving north, where he would establish his own group (one that continues to this day), start a record label, design hundreds of record covers, write reams of poetry, embrace Egyptian iconography, and insist, without a note of irony, that he was from Saturn. Revered by jazz and popular musicians alike, Sun Ra, with his refusal to adhere to expected social or musical norms, is widely credited with inspiring Afrofuturism – a growing cultural and aesthetic movement that embraces science-fiction, history and fantasy to explore the black experience.

Sun Ra's expansive discography combined with the vast archive of his drawings, poetry, and appearances, and the growing body of scholarship on the topic of Afrofuturism makes the film very timely. We are excited by the opportunity to explore Sun Ra's work through the lens of humanities themes, and believe the film will resonate widely with those familiar with his work and those who are not.

I am thrilled to work with director Christine Turner, who is a long-time collaborator and an alum of Firelight Media's Documentary Lab, and to partner again with Michael Kantor and the *American Masters* team to tell this story to a national audience.

I could not be more confident of the team we have put in place, or more excited about what I consider to be a timely and important film.

I am grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities for considering a grant in support of *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*.

Sincerely,

Stanley Nelson
Founder, Firelight Films

CHRISTINE TURNER

Director | Producer | (b) (6) / christineturner.com / (b) (6)

DIRECTING WORK

Director & Producer, UNTITLED RACIAL WEALTH GAP DOCUMENTARY, Story Syndicate, *in-post*
Director & Producer, J'NAI BRIDGES UNAMPLIFIED, Firelight for PBS/American Masters, 2023
Director, 1619 PROJECT (Episode 2 "Capitalism"), Docu-Series, New York Times for Hulu/ABC, 2023
Director & Producer, LYNCHING POSTCARDS, Firelight, MTV Documentary Films for Paramount+, 2021
Director & Producer, ART IN THE 21st CENTURY (Ep3: "San Francisco") Art21 for PBS, 2018
Director, LENNY (Segment: "Dead is Better"), A Casual Romance for HBO, 2018
Director & Producer, HOMEGOINGS, Feature Documentary, Peralta Pictures, ITVS for PBS/POV, 2013

Additional Producing Credits:

Producer, AMEND (Ep1: "Citizen" & Ep2: "Resistance") The Documentary Group for Netflix, 2021
Producer, TRICKY DICK (Ep4: "And Then You Destroy Yourself"), Left/Right for CNN, 2019
Co-Producer, WOMEN OF HONOR w. MICHELLE OBAMA & JILL BIDEN, Left/Right for Lifetime, 2015
Co-Producer, AMERICAN EXPERIENCE: BLACKOUT '77, Camera One Productions for PBS, 2015
Field Producer, FRONTLINE: OMARINA'S STORY, Left/Right for PBS, 2014
Field Producer, DON'T DIVORCE ME: KIDS RULES FOR PARENTS ON DIVORCE, HBO, 2013
Co-Producer, OUR AMERICA WITH LISA LING: TWIN LIVES, Part2 Pictures for OWN, 2011
Field Producer, CRAVE, travel/food series Prod. Left/Right for Food Network, 2011
Segment Producer, NEW YORK VOICES: ART & THE FEMINIST REVOLUTION, WNET, 2008
Associate Producer, BILL MOYERS JOURNAL: HOPE IN THE CONGO, Public Affairs TV for PBS, 2008

DOCUMENTARY SHORTS

Director, PAINT & PITCHFORK (Tribeca '22), The New Yorker, 2022
Director, BETYE SAAR: TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS (Sundance '19), New York Times Op-Docs, 2020
Director & Producer, KEVIN BEASLEY'S RAW MATERIALS, (DocNYC '19), Art21.org, 2019

AWARDS

Best Documentary, Vimeo Film Awards (Betye Saar: Taking Care of Business), 2021
Jury Award, PBS Online Film Festival (You Can Go), 2017
Emerging Talent Award, Voice of A Woman Festival, 2017
Regenerazione Award, Capalbio International Film Festival (You Can Go), 2016
Nominee, Outstanding Achievement in Filmmaking for TV, Cinema Eye Honors (Homegoings), 2014
Best Documentary, American Black Film Festival (Homegoings), 2013
Best Documentary, Northern California MLK, Jr. Foundation (Homegoings), 2013
Best Documentary, BlackStar Film Festival (Homegoings), 2013

FELLOWSHIPS

Concordia Fellowship, 2022
Sony Pictures Television Diverse Directors Program, 2016
Flaherty Film Seminar - George Stoney Fellowship, 2012
Firelight Media Documentary Lab, 2012
WGBH/CPB Producers Academy, 2008

GRANTS & FUNDING

Women in Film (WIF) Finishing Fund, 2016
New York State Council on the Arts, 2013
Independent Television Service (co-production funding), 2012
POV/American Documentary (co-production funding), 2012
Tribeca Film Institute, 2012
Jerome Foundation, 2012
New York Community Trust, 2012

GUEST LECTURES

New York University, Dept. of Graduate Film & TV, Tisch School of the Arts, New York, NY, 2018
Swarthmore College, Dept. of Film & Media Studies, Swarthmore, PA, 2018
Columbia University, Graduate School of Journalism, New York, NY, 2013
School of Visual Arts, Dept. of Social Documentary, New York, NY, 2013

PANELS DISCUSSIONS

Firelight Media Presents: Beyond Resilience (w. Dr. Terry Anne Scott et al) Virtual, 2021
DOC NYC Short List: Shorts: Search for Justice (w. Dawn Porter et al), Virtual, 2021
The Apollo Presents: Black Life Matters (w. Marshall Tyler, Eli Fantauzzi), Apollo Digital Stage, 2020
Vimeo Presents: Celebrating Black Artistry (w. Reinaldo Greene, Shaka King), BAM, Brooklyn, 2018
Master Class with Zeinabu irene Davis & Christine Turner, BlackStar Film Festival, Philadelphia, 2016
NYWIFT Presents: Supporting Your Doc Habit (w. Yoruba Richen, Jamila Wignot et al), NYC, 2016
When Sorrow Comes: A Symposium (w. Karla FC Holloway, Ravi Howard), Spelman College, 2014
The Apollo Presents: Homegoings (w. Stanley Nelson, Cynthia Lopez), NYC, 2013
Defining Myself for Myself (w. Dr. Marta Moreno Vega, Leslie Fields-Cruz), Reel Sisters, Brooklyn, 2013

EDUCATION

BFA, Film & Television, New York University, 2004

Peralta Pictures

January 4th, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing to share my utmost support of Firelight Film's documentary project, *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*, a film I couldn't be more excited to collaborate on as director.

I'm a filmmaker with over 15 years of experience working on documentaries exploring American history and contemporary social issues for broadcasters such as PBS, HBO, CNN, Netflix, Hulu and others. Over the years I have had the great pleasure of working with Firelight Films and Stanley Nelson on many occasions, most recently serving as director of the Peabody-nominated and Academy Award-shortlisted documentary, "Lynching Postcards: 'Token of a Great Day,'" which looks at the history of lynchings in America as commemorated by souvenir postcards, as well as director of "J'Nai Bridges Unamplified," a film exploring racial inequality in opera through the story of a rising singer, which will air on PBS American Masters this Spring.

When Firelight approached me about working on a documentary about Sun Ra, I was immediately drawn to the project. Sun Ra and his Afrofuturist vision continues to inspire younger generations of artists and his imprint can be seen and felt in the fields of music, literature, art and cinema now more than ever. Though there are films from the past that have captured aspects of Sun Ra's story, none have explored his life or legacy in depth or within the socio-political context of today. As a visual storyteller, I'm particularly excited by the cinematic possibilities that Sun Ra's story inspires and am eager to delve into a vast collection of archive materials available. With the guidance of our esteemed scholars and a visual approach that embodies the aesthetics of Afrofuturism itself, I look forward to bringing Sun Ra's story to life in a way we have not yet seen on screen before.

I'm absolutely honored to be a part of this project and look forward to serving proudly as its creative lead. If you have any questions, or would like more information, please do not hesitate to reach me at (b) (6)

Sincerely,



Christine Turner
Director/Producer

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, AMERICAN MASTERS, PBS (2014-Present)

- Acquired/produced and presented over 65 new programs for broadcast national
- Founded theatrical banner American Masters Pictures. Launched with three films at 2016 Sundance Film Festival including opening night selection, *Norman Lear: Just Another Version of You*. Premieres at Cannes, Tribeca, Toronto, and Venice Film Festivals.
- Created the American Masters Podcast.
- Pioneered online initiatives including the American Masters Digital Archive.
- Seven Primetime Emmy nominations for Outstanding Documentary or Nonfiction Series.
- Winner, Outstanding Arts and Culture Documentary, *Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool*
- Peabody Awards for *Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise* and *Lorraine Hansberry: Sighted Eyes/Feeling Heart*
- Critics' Choice Award for Best Ongoing Documentary Series.

PRESIDENT, ALMO, INC. (2001-Present)

Film and television distribution company with sales worldwide

Catalog includes *The American Film Theatre* (14 titles including *Rhinoceros* starring Zero Mostel and Gene Wilder, *A Delicate Balance* starring Katharine Hepburn, Sir Laurence Olivier's *Three Sisters*); *Play of the Week* (*The Iceman Cometh*, *The Dybbuk*); feature films such as *Hopscotch* (Walter Matthau, Glenda Jackson) and *The Chosen* (Rod Steiger, Robby Benson); and Oscar-nominated *King: A Filmed Record...Montgomery to Memphis*.

PRESIDENT, GHOST LIGHT FILMS, INC. (1996-Present)

Independent documentary film production company

Productions garnered six Primetime Emmy nominations, a News and Documentary Emmy nomination, a Writers Guild of America Award nomination, a Primetime Emmy and a Peabody Award.

FILM AND TELEVISION

***Superheroes: A Never-Ending Battle*, Producer/Director/Writer (2010-2013)**

A three-hour series for PBS, produced by Ghost Light Films in association with Oregon Public Broadcasting. Funded by PBS, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, among others. Hosted and narrated by Liev Schreiber. Distributed internationally by BBC Worldwide and Arte. Created educational modules for PBS Learning Media. Trended nationally on Twitter during premiere broadcast.

***Broadway Musicals: A Jewish Legacy*, Producer/Director/Writer (2013)**

A 90-minute co-production with *Great Performances*, Thirteen/WNET. Narrated by Joel Grey. Worldwide distribution by Ghost Light Films included BBC One broadcast as part of the *Imagine* series. Festival screenings in London, Melbourne, and Vancouver. Peabody Award.

***Give Me the Banjo*, Executive Producer (2011)**

A 90-minute documentary narrated by Steve Martin, part of first season of *PBS Arts Presents*. Directed by Marc Fields.

Make 'Em Laugh: The Funny Business of America, Producer/Director/Writer (2005-2009)
A six-part, six-hour co-production with Thirteen/WNET and BBC-TV. Hosted by Billy Crystal. Narrated by Amy Sedaris. Key talent included Steve Martin, Will Ferrell, Jerry Seinfeld, Judd Apatow, Whoopi Goldberg, and Chris Rock, among others. Nominated for Primetime Emmy for Nonfiction Writing.

Broadway: The American Musical, Producer/Director/Writer (1996-2004)
A six-part, six-hour co-production with Thirteen/WNET, BBC, NHK, and Carlton International. Hosted and narrated by Julie Andrews. Funded by the NEA and the NEH, and selected as one of four documentaries screened to honor the NEH on its 40th anniversary. Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Non-Fiction Series and many other awards.

Quincy Jones: In the Pocket, Producer/Director/Writer (2001)
A 90-minute *American Masters* documentary on the musician/producer. Key talent included President Bill Clinton, Oprah Winfrey, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell, Maya Angelou, and Sidney Poitier. Cine Golden Eagle Award.

Cornerstone, Co-Producer/Co-Director (1999)
A feature-length verité documentary, co-created with Stephen Ives of Insignia Films. A portrait of a multi-cultural theater company on a 10,000-mile bus tour with an adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. Television premiere on HBO.

The West, Producer (1991-1996)
An eight-part, 12-hour series for PBS. Directed by Stephen Ives. Executive produced by Ken Burns. Narrated by Peter Coyote.

Lindbergh, Associate Producer (1990)
A 60-minute program for the *American Experience* series on PBS. Directed by Stephen Ives. Co-produced by Ken Burns.

WRITING

Superheroes! Capes, Cows, and the Creation of Comic Book Culture, co-authored with Laurence Maslon, Crown Archetype, New York, NY, 2013.

Make 'Em Laugh: The Funny Business of America, co-authored with Laurence Maslon, Twelve, an imprint of the Hachette Book Group, New York, NY, 2009.

Broadway: The American Musical, co-authored with Laurence Maslon, Bulfinch Press, New York, NY, 2004.

College 101: A First Year Reader (essay), edited by John D. Lawry, McGraw-Hill Education, New York, NY, 1992.

Selected articles: *Interview Magazine*, *American Theatre Magazine*, *New York Press*

EDUCATION

M.F.A. in Directing, University of California, San Diego
B.A., Theater Arts, Cornell University

FACULTY

MFA SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY FILM AT SVA, NEW YORK, NY, 2009-2012

January 5, 2023

Dear NEH Program Officers and Advisors:

On behalf of the AMERICAN MASTERS series, I write to express my deepest support for the story of *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*, which explores the life and work of the philosopher, poet, and prolific composer of avant-garde jazz music. We are fully committed to this project and look forward to contributing a six-figure sum toward production costs.

Sun Ra's mythic vision of a Black space age future was not only expressed in words, music, and "cosmo dramas" that were performed around the world, but studied on college campuses. The filmmaking team on this project have done an extraordinary job of bringing new scholarship to his story, showcasing humanities themes regarding race, technology, and mythmaking amidst this most colorful story. Sun Ra's prodigious output of imaginative art, teachings and mythmaking seems particularly resonant today, as evidenced by contemporary fashion trends, books, newspaper and magazine articles, and the continued popularity of the Sun Ra Arkestra as led by the indefatigable Marshall Allen.

The filmmaking team from Firelight Media is uniquely equipped to bring this story to a broad and diverse national audience. AMERICAN MASTERS has worked closely with Firelight, co-producing the Emmy-winning film on Miles Davis, AMERICAN MASTERS and collaborating on two seasons of "In the Making," a series of digital shorts about emerging masters. The director of the Sun Ra program, Christine Turner, recently directed a film on opera star J'Nai Bridges that will be broadcast on AMERICAN MASTERS in March, and her 2021 documentary short, *Lynching Postcards: "Token of a Great Day"* is simply extraordinary.

AMERICAN MASTERS is dedicated to sharing diverse stories that reflect the full breadth of American culture. Our national television broadcast of *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* will be carried by over 90% of the 350 PBS affiliates with the potential to reach over a million people. Our dedication to quality programming is absolute -- the series has been honored with the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Nonfiction Series 10 times since 1999. Our films have a dedicated section on our website, housed at pbs.org, which enhances the reach of the broadcast, and a robust presence on social media.

AMERICAN MASTERS sincerely hopes that the National Endowment for the Humanities will join public television in supporting a landmark documentary showcasing the remarkable life and work of Sun Ra, and insuring that the film engages a broad public television audience on a variety of platforms.

Sincerely,



Michael Kantor
Executive Producer





MARCIA SMITH

Marcia Smith (she/her) is President and co-Founder of Firelight Media, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting diverse filmmakers and advancing underrepresented stories. Now in its 23rd year, Firelight Media is a thriving organization that provides financial and creative support to documentary filmmakers of color at all stages of their careers and is a field-leading voice for diversity, equity, and ethics. Under Marcia's leadership, Firelight Media was honored with a MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions (the "genius" award for organizations) and the International Documentary Association's Pioneer Award. ongoing support from the Ford Foundation, and American Rescue Plan support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Firelight has supported over 200 filmmakers, including multiple Sundance, Tribeca, and SXSW winners, Oscar nominees, and Emmy, Peabody and duPont award Winners.

Marcia was honored with the BlackStar Film Festival Luminary Award in 2019 and the Muse Award from New York Women in Film & Television in 2016. She won an Emmy in 2020 for Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool on PBS's American Masters, and won the Writers' Guild Award and a Primetime Emmy nomination for the film, The Murder of Emmett Till, on PBS's American Experience in 2004.

As a writer, her work has included the documentary films Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges and Universities; Through the Fire: The Legacy of Barack Obama; Freedom Riders; Jonestown: The Life and Death of the Peoples Temple; Marcus Garvey: Look for Me in the Whirlwind; a forthcoming 4-hour series on the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and a number of other films on African American history. Her writing has also appeared in Documentary magazine, The Nation, and The Village Voice. Her acclaimed book, Black America: A Photographic Journey, was published by Thunder Bay Press in 2003.

As an artist, she was most recently the creator of the NEH-funded installation, Apalachicola African American History Pop-up Museum in February 2020, which featured archival and original photos, video, audio, and artifacts, and served as creative producer for Commemorate and Celebrate Freedom, a 2016 projection mapping project on the exterior of the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Marcia is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the Peabody Board of Directors, and the board of the International Documentary Association. She has also worked in government, politics, and as a senior executive at both the Ford Foundation and The Atlantic Philanthropies.

She holds an MS in Social Research from Hunter College, a BS in Media & Communications from Emerson College, and was a Revson Fellow at Columbia



January 9, 2023

Dear National Endowment of the Humanities,

I am excited to transmit this letter of commitment to serve as Project Director of *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* (working title) in partnership with Firelight Films and American Masters.

There could not be a better time to tackle the larger-than-life personality and influence of Sun Ra. His life story, from roots in the “Magic City” of segregated Birmingham, AL through to his fascination with ancient Egypt and space exploration, is nothing short of captivating. And his influence on contemporary musicians and artists is only growing, as evidenced by recent tributes and mentions from the likes of Janelle Monae, Questlove, and the writers of the hit show *Lovecraft Country*.

Firelight Media is proud to serve as the fiscal sponsor for this project. It fits neatly within our history, purpose and body of work, and I could not be more pleased and excited that we have arrived here with a very strong production team in place. *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* will be a timely and important film that I believe will be attractive to a broad and very diverse audience, including those interested in jazz, experimental music, African American history, Afrofuturist philosophies, and those who are simply fascinated by this completely unique and uniquely American figure.

I am grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities for considering a grant in support of *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Marcia Smith", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marcia Smith
President, Firelight Media

Bradford K. Smith
bradksmi@umich.edu

Summary of Experience

A life combining passion for music with commitment to social justice. Extensive overseas and headquarters experience in international foundation, government foundation and non-governmental contexts. Demonstrated ability to lead and innovate within complex institutional and cultural settings in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of programs based upon, and appropriate to societal needs, particularly related to human rights, racial equity, and social justice. Capable of clearly analyzing policy and program options, harnessing the power of data and technology, articulating new ideas in both written and verbal form, and mobilizing Board and Staff support for their realization. Skilled at recruiting and building diverse staff teams. Demonstrated commitment to the social sector with a solid track record of promotion to positions of increasing authority and responsibility over a career spanning more than 40 years.

Selected Achievements

- Responsible for research, pre-interviews, writing, and asset inventory for Firelight Films' documentary *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*, about jazz composer, musician, band leader and poet Sun Ra whose vision of a Black space age future has served as a source of inspiration for the growing Afrofuturism movement in music, literature, art, and performance.
- Led a successful non-profit merger between two key social sector infrastructure organizations—Foundation Center and GuideStar--resulting in the creation of a new \$38 million organization, Candid. Candid contains the world's largest databases on the work of nonprofits, philanthropic foundations, the financial flows that bind them, and the ways in which they are helping the world meet the critical challenges of our times.
- Transformed Foundation Center, created in the wake of 1950s McCarthy-era hearings, into an online resource employing advance data science and global partnerships to promote transparency and knowledge sharing among foundations and their nonprofit partners, making it "the Bloomberg of the philanthropic sector."
- Guided the growth of Oak Foundation, a family foundation making grants in 41 countries in North America, Europe, Africa, Latin America, and South Asia. Program foci covered Climate Change and Marine Conservation, Housing and Homelessness, Child Abuse, Human Rights, Women's issues and the Arts.
- Provided leadership for the Ford Foundation's Peace and Social Justice Program, focused on Human Rights, International Cooperation, Governance and Civil Society in the United States, Africa, Asia, Latin America, Russia, Europe and the Middle East. The Peace and Social Justice Program made more than \$300 million in grants per year to universities, research centers, NGOs, community-based organizations, and advocacy groups.
- Created and managed Ford Foundation's *Special Initiative for Africa*, a four-year planning process to launch Trust Africa, an African-staffed and located foundation dedicated to grantmaking on issues of peace and conflict, citizenship, identity, and regional integration across the African continent.

- Led the Ford Foundation's Brazil Office through a difficult period in that country's democratic transition marked by inflation of 50% per month and the impeachment of the first directly elected President following decades of military rule.

Employment History

1/21- present	Visiting Professional/Academic Affiliate, Center for Social Solutions, University of Michigan
2/19–12/21	President, Candid (created by the merger of Foundation Center and GuideStar)
10/08-1/19	President, Foundation Center New York, NY
1/06-6/08	President, Oak Foundation Geneva, Switzerland
4/96-12/05	Vice President, Peace and Social Justice Program The Ford Foundation, New York, NY
8/92-3/96	Representative, Brazil Office The Ford Foundation, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
10/91-7/92	Program Officer, Brazil Office The Ford Foundation, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
3/85-9/91	Senior Foundation Representative, Brazil Office Inter-American Foundation, Rosslyn, Va.
12/82-2/85	Foundation Representative, Brazil Office Inter-American Foundation, Rosslyn, Va.
1/80-11/82	Manager, World Development /Center for International Management Studies, YMCA of the USA, New York
5/77-10/79	Project Coordinator, Project DIDA (Dessarrollo Integral del Aborigen), YMCA of Costa Rica, San Jose
6/75-4/77	Associate Director, YMCA of Costa Rica, San Jose

Education

M.A.	Economics (political economy) Graduate Faculty – New School for Social Research New York, NY
B.A.	Musical Arts (music history and musicology) University of Michigan Ann Arbor, MI

Board Service

The Tinker Foundation, New York
International Center for Transitional Justice (New York)
Arts for Art, New York (Advisory Board)
Lever for Change, Chicago (Advisory Board)

Bradford Smith

(b) (6)

7 January 2023

Dear National Endowment of the Humanities,

I am writing to give my unqualified support for and commitment to Firelight Films' documentary project on *Sun Ra and the Birth of Afrofuturism*, having been involved in the first conversations that gave rise to this project more than three years ago and participating today as a member of the media team. Award-winning films about Miles Davis, the Black Panthers, Frederick Douglass, Harriett Tubman, and a series in development on the transatlantic slave trade, uniquely position Firelight to tell the story of Sun Ra and how his remarkable legacy of music, thought and imagery continues to inspire new generations. And with the partnership and support of PBS' American Masters we are excited that audiences in the U.S. and around the world will have the opportunity to engage with *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*.

My first encounter with Sun Ra came in 1971 when my brother gave me a copy of the Saturn Records LP, *Super-Sonic Jazz (21st Century Edition)* by Sun Ra and His Arkestra (1956). The moment I heard the hand-clapping swing of "Kingdom of Not" and read the liner notes--*Kingdom of Not is not about a kingdom which is in the past but it is about a kingdom called Not which although it is not, yet is--*I started down the rabbit hole. The music spoke to me, the language intrigued me, and I felt it all long before I could articulate what I was feeling.

But unlike so many of those who today draw inspiration from Sun Ra, I also had the opportunity to see the Arkestra perform live in clubs, festivals and concert halls. Two stand out, a marathon evening at the legendary Slugs' Saloon "in the Far East" (1972) and Carnegie Hall (1973). Slugs' was a shoebox sized, no-frills club barely large enough to fit the musicians, dancers and singers who enveloped the audience in their sonic thunder, call-and-response-chanting, and improvised dance, while home movies of Egyptian pyramids played on the walls. At Carnegie Hall "Sun Ra and His Space Arkestra" appeared with 25 performers in a grand, theatrical "cosmo drama." It was a daytime concert, and for the finale, after the fully costumed Arkestra had filed through the audience out on to the sidewalk and around Carnegie Hall, they came parading down 57th street playing "Discipline 27" as a huge red summer sun set behind their backs.

Studying music history and ethnomusicology I had the opportunity to explore the use of silence, space and time in Sun Ra's music, the many instruments he used from around the world, and transcribe his recorded compositions. While music, in general, and Sun Ra, in particular, have remained an avocation throughout my life, my career has been dedicated to the intersection between philanthropy and social justice. Working on these issues in countries like Brazil and across the African continent gave me broad comparative perspectives on the role of race, ethnicity, and identity as well as "bridging" frameworks like Pan-Africanism, and more recently Afrofuturism. These themes continue to intersect in my roles as Visiting Professional at the University of Michigan's Center for Social Solutions, as board member of the International Center for Transitional Justice, and as a long-time advisor to Arts for Art, Inc., whose annual Vision Festival carries on the free jazz, inter-arts tradition pioneered by Sun Ra and the loft jazz movement.

Doing research, writing, and production tasks for Firelight's documentary, *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*, is the project of a lifetime. As our Humanities Scholar, Brent Hayes Edwards writes in his own letter, Sun Ra is "...one of the most extraordinary Black cultural figures and thinkers of the mid- to late-twentieth century" whose vast contributions are only beginning to be realized. With so many of the speculative modes that together constitute Afrofuturism on the rise, now is the time to tell the extraordinary story of Herman Poole Blount and his courageous journey from the Jim Crow South to the omniverse.

In 1982 Sun Ra was recognized as an NEA Jazz Master. With the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and in partnership with PBS, Firelight Films now aspires to establish Sun Ra as an American Master.

Sincerely,

Bradford Smith

Bradford Smith

Brent Hayes Edwards
Department of English and Comparative Literature
602 Philosophy Hall, Mail Code 4927
Columbia University
New York, NY 10027
bhe2@columbia.edu

Education

Columbia University, Dept. of English and Comparative Literature, Ph.D. 1998 (with distinction)
 Yale University, B.A. 1990 in Literature (with distinction); summa cum laude; Phi Beta Kappa

Employment

Peng Family Professor, Department of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia U., 2020-
 Professor, Department of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia U., 2007-2019
 Associate Professor, Department of English, Rutgers U., 2003-2007
 Assistant Professor, Department of English, Rutgers U., 1997-2003

Selected Administrative and Editorial Positions

Editor, *PMLA*, 2021-
 Associate Director, Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, Columbia U., 2021-
 Director, Scholars-in-Residence Program, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New
 York Public Library, 2016-
 Co-Editor, *Social Text*, 2001-11

Selected Invited Visiting Appointments

Franklin Visiting Scholar, Departments of Romance Languages and African American Studies,
 University of Georgia, March 2021
 Visiting Professor, Reid Hall (Columbia U. Global Center), Paris, France, Fall 2013
 Distinguished Visiting Professor, Washington U. in St. Louis, March 2010
 Phyllis and Gerald LeBoff Distinguished Visiting Scholar, Department of Media, Culture, and
 Communication, Steinhardt School, NYU, Spring 2009
 Louis Armstrong Visiting Professor of Jazz Studies, Columbia U., Spring 2007
 Faculty, School of Criticism and Theory, Cornell U., Summer 2006
 Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Performance Studies, NYU, Fall 2001

Selected Recent Awards and Fellowships

American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2020
 2019 Truman Capote Award for Literary Criticism (*Epistrophies*)
 2018 ASCAP Foundation Virgil Thomson Award for Outstanding Music Criticism (*Epistrophies*)
 Heyman Center Faculty Fellowship, Columbia University, 2017-18
 Guggenheim Fellowship, 2015
 PEN/Hein Translation Fund Grant, 2012
 Lenfest Distinguished Columbia Faculty Award, Columbia University, 2009
 Fellow, Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers, New York Public Library, 2005-2006
 2004 John Hope Franklin Prize, American Studies Association (*The Practice of Diaspora*)
 2003 Gilbert Chinard Prize, Society for French Historical Studies (*The Practice of Diaspora*)
 Runner-Up, 2003 James Russell Lowell Prize, Modern Language Association (*The Practice of Diaspora*)
 Board of Trustees Research Fellowship for Scholarly Excellence, Rutgers University, 2003
 Scholar-in-Residence, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 1997-98
 Fellow, Du Bois Institute, Harvard University, 1996-1997

Books

Epistrophies: Jazz and the Literary Imagination (Harvard University Press, 2017)

The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism
(Harvard University Press, 2003).

Selected Anthologies and Scholarly Editions

Claude McKay, *Amiable with Big Teeth*, co-edited by Brent Edwards and Jean-Christophe Cloutier (Penguin Classics, 2017).

The Norton Anthology of African American Literature, 3rd edition, period editor for the Harlem Renaissance (Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Nellie McKay, General Editors) (2014)

W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, ed. Brent Edwards (Oxford World's Classics, 2007).

Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, ed. Brent Edwards (Barnes & Noble, 2005).

Uptown Conversation: The New Jazz Studies, edited with Robert G. O'Meally and Farah Jasmine Griffin (Columbia University Press, 2004).

Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo*, ed. Brent Edwards (Barnes & Noble Classics, 2004).

Book Translation

Michel Leiris, *Phantom Africa*, translated and edited by Brent Hayes Edwards (Seagull Books, 2017)

Edited Journal Special Issues and Sections

"Ed Roberson, American Poet: A Special Section," *Callaloo* 33.3 (Summer 2010).

"Césaire in 1956," *Social Text* 103 (May 2010).

"Collective History: Thirty Years of Social Text," edited with Anna McCarthy, *Social Text* 100 (Fall 2009).

"Postcolonial Traces," *Social Text* 78 (Spring 2004).

"Jazz Poetics," edited with Farah Jasmine Griffin and Maria Damon, *Callaloo* 25.1 (Winter 2002). Runner-up, Best Special Issue Award, Council of Editors of Learned Journals, 2002.

"Dossier on Black Radicalism," *Social Text* 67 (Summer 2001).

Selected Articles and Book Chapters

"Sounding the Open Secret: The Poetics of Fred Moten," in *American Poets in the 21st Century: Poetics of Social Engagement*, ed. Michael Dowdy and Claudia Rankine (Wesleyan UP, 2018). 306-320.

"The Sound of Anticolonialism," in *Audible Empire*, ed. Ronald Radano and Tejumola Olaniyan (Duke UP, 2016). 269-91.

"The Taste of the Archive," *Callaloo* 35.4 (Fall 2012): 944-972.

"Ralph Ellison and the Grain of Internationalism," in *Globalizing American Studies*, ed. Brian T. Edwards and Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2010). 115-134.

"Langston Hughes and the Futures of Diaspora," *American Literary History* 28.1 (2007): 689-711.

"Late Romance," in *W. E. B. Du Bois and the Gender of the Color Line*, ed. Susan Gillman and Alys Eve Weinbaum (U of Minnesota P, 2007). 124-149.

"Aimé Césaire and the Syntax of Influence," *Research in African Literatures* 36.2 (Summer 2005): 1-18.

"Pebbles of Consonance: A Reply to Critics," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 17 (March 2005): 134-149.

"The Shadow of Shadows," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 11.1 (Spring 2003): 11-49.

"Louis Armstrong and the Syntax of Scat," *Critical Inquiry* 28.3 (Spring 2002): 618-649.

"The Literary Ellington," *Representations* 77 (Winter 2002): 1-29.

"The Uses of *Diaspora*," *Social Text* 66 (Spring 2001): 45-74.

"The Ethnics of Surrealism," *Transition* 78 (June 1999): 84-135.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

26 December 2022

Dear National Endowment for the Humanities:

I am writing in enthusiastic support of the application submitted by the renowned director Stanley Nelson and Firelight Films for their film project, *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*.

I am a scholar of African diasporic culture and history and a professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. My areas of expertise include African American literature, Francophone African and Caribbean literature, theories of diaspora, the history of colonialism, cultural politics in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s, surrealism, 20th-century poetics, and jazz. I have written extensively on the interrelation and cross-fertilization between jazz and literature, especially in my 2017 book *Epistrophies: Jazz and the Literary Imagination* (Harvard University Press), which considers some of the many African American poet and fiction writers who have found inspiration and formal models in the music (including Langston Hughes, Sterling Brown, James Weldon Johnson, Ralph Ellison, Amiri Baraka, and Nathaniel Mackey) as well as a number of musicians who write (including Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Mary Lou Williams, Cecil Taylor, and Henry Threadgill). One of the chapters in my book focuses on Sun Ra's writing, which included poetry, broadsides, liner notes, and essays. In beginning to research that chapter more than twenty years ago, I became fascinated with Sun Ra not only as one of the great composers and bandleaders in jazz, but also as one of the most extraordinary Black cultural figures and thinkers of the mid- to late-twentieth century.

As early as the 1950s, decades before the celebrated emergence of a generation of brilliant African diasporic artistic iconoclasts in the 1970s and 1980s — including George Clinton of the funk band Parliament-Funkadelic; the science fiction authors Samuel Delany and Octavia Butler; the visual artist and rapper Rammellzee; the Congolese architect and installation artist Bodys Isek Kingelez; and the Jamaican dub producer Lee “Scratch” Perry — Sun Ra was describing his music as “Futuristic Sounds” and “Art Forms of Dimensions Tomorrow.” Through his carefully elaborated otherworldliness (not only in his music but also in his extravagant dress and self-presentation, as he habitually described himself as a visitor from the planet Saturn), Sun Ra forced his listeners to confront the possibility of radical change and to imagine alternative futures. As critics, biographers, and scholars including John Szwed, Greg Tate, Kodwo Eshun, William Sites, and John Corbett have pointed out, coming to terms with Sun Ra's artistic legacy means moving beyond the impulse to dismiss him as an “eccentric” and recognizing his work as a key *political* intervention. His exorbitance — his unstinting commitment to being ever *out* — pushes us to think about what we take for granted, about the inequities and illogicalities we assume we cannot change, thereby revising and expanding the boundaries of what we take to be possible in our lives as well as in art.

There has been a good deal of scholarship about Sun Ra, from Szwed's definitive biography, to Corbett's invaluable artbook editions of Ra's broadsides and album cover art, to the collected volume of Ra's collected writings edited by James Wolf and Hartmut Geerken. Although there are a couple of documentary films, such as Robert Mugge's *Sun Ra: A Joyful Noise* (1980) and Don Letts' *Sun Ra – Brother from Another Planet* (2005), I have felt for some time that we need a new film about Sun Ra that would draw on the voluminous footage of the Arkestra and reframe Sun Ra's significance for the contemporary era, in which many of the speculative modes he pioneered have come to be prominent features of the cultural landscape. For this reason I am thrilled that a director as accomplished as Stanley Nelson is planning to take on this project. It makes perfect sense to frame the film not only as an introduction to Sun Ra's life and music but also to highlight his role as a pioneer of what has come to be known as Afrofuturism.

I am honored to serve as a Humanities Scholar on this project and to help in any way I can, whether that means providing sources or contacts, or in consulting formally or informally about the importance of Sun Ra's life and art and broader circuits of Black culture. I urge you in the strongest terms to support the development of this crucial film.

Please feel free to contact me by e-mail (bhe2@columbia.edu) if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Brent Hayes Edwards
Peng Family Professor of English and Comparative Literature
Department of English and Comparative Literature
Center for Jazz Studies
Associate Director, Institute for Comparative Literature and Society
Columbia University
bhe2@columbia.edu
Editor, *PMLA*
2022-23 Ford Foundation Scholar in Residence, MoMA

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Brent Hayes Edwards | **The New York Public Library**
Director, Scholars-in-Residence Program
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
515 Malcolm X Boulevard, New York, NY 10037-1801
T: 212.491.2203 | brentedwards@nypl.org

Earl Lewis
Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae
November 2022

Education

1984	Ph.D. University of Minnesota		
1981	M.A. University of Minnesota	Major:	American History
1978	B.A. Concordia College. Moorhead, Minnesota	Major:	History and Psychology Magna Cum Laude

Employment

2019- Thomas C. Holt Distinguished University Professor of History, Afroamerican and African Studies, and Public Policy, University of Michigan

2018- Director, Center for Social Solutions and Professor, History and Afroamerican and African Studies, University of Michigan

2013-2018 President, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

2004-2012 Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Asa Griggs Candler Professor of History and African American Studies, Emory University

1998-2004 Vice Provost for Academic Affairs - Graduate Studies, and Dean of the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies, University of Michigan

1997 Interim Dean, Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies, University of Michigan, September 1997-February 1998

1995 Professor, Department of History and Center for Afro-American and African Studies (CAAS), University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1995 - 2004

1993 Director, Center for Afroamerican and African Studies (CAAS), University of Michigan Ann Arbor, July 1991 - June 1993

1991 Interim Director, Center for Afroamerican Studies (CAAS), University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, July 1990 - June 1991.

1989 Associate Professor, Department of History and CAAS, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1989 - 1995

1985 Assistant Professor, Afro-American Studies Department, University of California, Berkeley, 1985 - 1989

Select Publications – Books

2016 With Nancy Cantor, eds., Our Compelling Interests (Princeton University Press)

2004 With Patricia Gurin, Jeffrey Lehman, et.al., Defending Diversity (University of Michigan Press)

2001 With Heidi Ardizzone, Love on Trial: An American Scandal in Black and White (W.W. Norton, May 2001)

2000 With Robin Kelley, ed., To Make Our World Anew (Oxford University Press)

1997 With Robin Kelley, General Editors, Young (Oxford) History of African Americans, 11 volumes, (1994 - 1997)

1996 With Joe W. Trotter, Jr., Blacks in the Industrial Age: A Documentary History (Northeastern University Press) 1996

1991 In Their Own Interests: Race, Class and Power in Twentieth Century Norfolk, Virginia (University of California Press). Paperback edition, Fall 1993

Select Publications -- Articles

2019 "History and the Common Good: Scholarship in the Public Eye," Presidential Address,

- The Journal of American History, vol. 106, no. 3, (December 2019), pp. 577-590.
- 2019 "Toward a 2.0 Compact for the Liberal Arts," Daedalus, vol. 148, number 4, (Fall 2019), pp. 217-34.
- 1997 "La Constitution Des Américains Africains Comme Minorité" translated "Constructing African Americans as Minorities," Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales, (Mai - Juin 1997): 569-92.
- 1996 "To Tell a Full Story: The Institutionalization of the CIO and Matters of Race and Class," Labor History (Spring 1996): 171-77.
- 1995 "'To Turn As On a Pivot': History, Race, and African Americans in a World of Overlapping Diasporas," American Historical Review, 100 (June 1995): 765-87.
- "Race, Equity, and Democracy: African Americans and the Struggle for Civil Rights," In Herrick Chapman and Reid Andrews, eds., The Social Construction of Democracy (New York: NYU Press, 1995), pp. 193-217.
- "Race, the State, and Social Construction," in Stanley I. Kutler, ed., Encyclopedia of The United States Experience in the Twentieth Century, vols. 1-4 (New York: Charles Scribners and Sons, vol. 1, 1995), pp. 129-60.

Select Awards and Grants

- 2022 Walter Lippmann Fellow, American Academy of Political and Social Sciences
- 2021 Honorary Degree, Alma College
- 2021 Allen P. Splete Award for Outstanding Service, Council of Independent Colleges
- 2020 P.I. Crafting Democratic Futures Grant, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation--\$5 million (January 2021-December 2023)
- 2019 Campbell Lectures in the Humanities, Rice University
- 2019 Honorary Degrees, Bowdoin College and Wayne State University
- 2019 Co-Principal Investigator, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Grant--\$3 million (2018 – present; co-PI effective 11/19)
- 2018 Nathan I. Huggins Lectures, Harvard University
- 2018 University of Minnesota, CLA, Outstanding Alumni Award
- 2018 Honorary Degrees, Berea College and California State University-Fullerton
- 2017 Honorary Degrees, Southwestern University and Clark University
- 2016 Honorary Degree, Carnegie Mellon University
- 2016-21 Vice President, President-elect, President, Past President, Past, Past President—Organization of American Historians
- 2015 Honorary Degree, University of Cincinnati, Dartmouth College, Rutgers University—Newark
- 2013 Elected member of Council on Foreign Relations
- 2008 Fellow, American Academy of Arts and Sciences
- 2006-07 Principal Investigator, Ford Foundation Grant, \$78,000
- 2001-04 Co-Principal Investigator, Mellon Foundation Grants--\$2.4 million
- 2003 The Elsa Barkley Brown and Robin D.G. Kelley Collegiate Professor of History and African American and African Studies designate
- 2002 Honorary Degree, Doctor of Humanities, Honoris Causa, Concordia College
- 2001 Chicago Tribune Favorite Book, Love on Trial
- 2001 Distinguished Achievement Award – University of Minnesota
- 2000 Elected to membership in the American Antiquarian Society
-
- 2022 Walter Lippmann Fellow, American Academy of Political and Social Sciences
- 2021 Honorary Degree, Alma College
- 2021 Allen P. Splete Award for Outstanding Service, Council of Independent Colleges
- 2020 P.I. Crafting Democratic Futures Grant, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation--\$5 million (January 2021-December 2023)

- 2019 Campbell Lectures in the Humanities, Rice University
- 2019 Honorary Degrees, Bowdoin College and Wayne State University
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- 2017 Honorary Degrees, Southwestern University and Clark University
- 2016 Honorary Degree, Carnegie Mellon University
- 2016-21 Vice President, President-elect, President, Past President, Past, Past President—
Organization of American Historians
- 2015 Honorary Degree, University of Cincinnati, Dartmouth College, Rutgers University—
Newark
- 2013 Elected member of Council on Foreign Relations
- 2008 Fellow, American Academy of Arts and Sciences

Recent and Selected Professional and Civic Service

- 2017 - Member, Board of Directors, American Funds, Capital Group (2017 – present)
- 2014 - Member, Board of Directors, 2U, Inc. (2014 – present)
- 2013-16 Member, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Lincoln Project (2013-16)
- 2012 - Member, Board of Trustees, Educational Testing Service (2012-present); vice chair,
(2019-present)
- 2010-13 Member, Department of Education, National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality
and Integrity, Washington DC (2010 – 2013)
- 2008-20 Member, Board of Regents, Concordia College—Moorhead, Minnesota (2008 – 2020;
Vice-Chair, 2016 – 2018; chair 2018 - 2020)
- 2007-08 Chair, Mayor's Content Committee, Center for Human and Civil Rights, Atlanta, Georgia
- 2004-12 Member or chair, Board of Directors, American Council of Learned Societies (2004 - 2012)

Earl Lewis, Director and Professor

November 28, 2022

Marcia Smith
President
Firelight Media
72 Hamilton Terrace
New York, NY 10031

Dear Marcia:

I write in support of your application to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). You and Stanley are two of the premier documentarians in the United States. Your new project on Herman Poole Blount, better known as Sun Ra, promises to be a true revelation. Sun Ra was a musical innovator, a noted social philosopher, and a paragon of the melding of African cultural traditions, science fiction, and technocultural practices. As such, he is often credited with creating the concept Afrofuturism. Aside from those who may have read John Szwed's highly acclaimed biography, *Space is the Place*, Sun Ra's life, and not the mythology surrounding his life, is not known by many. With *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* you and colleagues seek to correct the ways Sun Ra is understood and misunderstood.

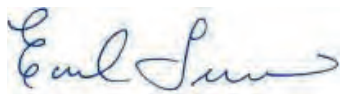
Colleagues at NEH should know Stanley Nelson, Jr. is not only an award-winning film maker, he is also a great storyteller. He and you own Firelight Media and Firelight Films, a nonprofit film production company. To date, you have completed at least twenty-six films, with others in production. Thus, with adequate financial support there is no doubt the film will be produced. There is also no question that the quality will be exceptional as you have won multiple Emmy and Peabody awards for previous films.

During my previous role as president of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, I found your work on Black Colleges and the Black Panthers so compelling that we abandoned our longtime opposition to funding films. That shift in perspective was occasioned by meetings with the both of you and gaining a fuller sense of the craftsmanship as well as research that went into each of your productions. The decision was well rewarded by the range and insights garnered from the works produced.

Popular audiences encountered the idea of Afrofuturism and Sun Ra from the short-lived but highly acclaimed HBO show, "Lovecraft Country," especially in episode 7, "I am." During that episode two of the central characters enter a portal that takes them to a new dimension and connects them with African peoples, past, present, and future. The episode features words from Sun Ra. While that commercial introduction may have served the purpose of situating Afrofuturism in the social imagination, the film being produced will locate Blount in the Alabama of his birth, address his social and intellectual transformation, his virtuoso musical adventures, and his flirtations with esoteric ideas and beliefs. We also stand to learn even more about the influences he exerted on successive generations of thinkers, activists, musicians, and cultural workers—from George Clinton to members of the Black Panthers.

In sum, I fully endorse the forthcoming film on Sun Ra and hope that your project is given every consideration. Once completed, viewers will not only have a deeper sense of Afrofuturism, but they will also undoubtedly have a fuller sense of how a Black man, born and buried in Birmingham, Alabama, transformed genres and birthed new ways of seeing the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Earl Lewis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Earl Lewis
Thomas C. Holt Distinguished University Professor of History
Afroamerican and African Studies and Public Policy
President Emeritus, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Thomas Stanley

Curriculum Vitae

Education

- 2009 Ph.D., Ethnomusicology, University of Maryland, College Park, MD
2003 M.A., Musicology, University of Maryland, College Park, MD
1981 B.A., Psychology, Brown University, Providence, RI

Teaching Experience

- 2022–present Associate Professor, School of Art, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA
2021–2022 Assistant Professor, School of Art, George Mason University
2018–2020 Lecturer, School of Art, George Mason University
2015–2017 Assistant Research Professor, Virginia Serious Game Institute, George Mason University
2006–2015 Term Assistant Professor, School of Art, George Mason University
2003–2005 Lecturer, Department of Art and Visual Technology, George Mason University
2004 Lecturer, School of Music, University of Maryland, College Park, MD

Books and Book Chapters, Published

- 2014 *The Execution of Sun Ra: The Mysterious Tale of a Dark Body Sent to Earth to Usher in an Unprecedented Era of Cosmic Regeneration and Happiness*, Wasteland Press, Louisville, KY
2016 "Alter Destiny, Free Black Music, and the Temporal Culture of the Maroons" essay in *Black Quantum Futurism*, ed. Rasheedah Phillips, Afrofuturist Affair, Philadelphia, PA
2006 "Six is Nine, Now What? New Media, New Minds, New Beings" chapter in *Live Movies: A Field Guide to New Media for the Performing Arts*, eds. Kirby Malone and Gail Scott White, Multimedia Performance Studio, Fairfax, VA
1998 *George Clinton and P-Funk: An Oral History*, coauthored David Mills, Larry Alexander, and Aris Wilson, Avon Books, New York, NY

Books, as Subject

- 2018 *Resounding the Rhetorical: Composition as a Quasi-Object*, Byron Hawk, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA

Articles

- 2021 "Alter Destiny: A Survivor's Guide", critical race studies, *Three Fold Press*, Volume 1, Issue 2, 2021
2020 "A Conversation with Thomas Stanley" interviewed by Luke Stewart, *Sound American, the Sun Ra issue*, No.24
2017 "Improvisation and Social Aesthetics (Improvisation, Community, and Social Practice)", book review, *Music Reference Services Quarterly*, online, 21 Dec 2017
2014 Book Review of *Art of Immersive Soundscapes* ed. by P. Minevich, E. Waterman, and J. Harley, *Music Reference Services Quarterly*, Volume 17, Issue 4, 2014
2012 "Laughs Last: The Bevis Griffin Story" Interview and feature in *Yoyo/so4*, Eds. Latasha Nevada Diggs, Greg Tate, et al.
2008 Review of "Play Jankunu Play: The Garifuna Wanaragua Ritual of Belize", *Yearbook of Traditional Music*, Volume 40, Winter
2008 "What the Spirit Knows" [on HR, Bad Brains], *Signal to Noise*, issue No. 51
2006 "My Black Pages" [on Greg Tate, Burnt Sugar], *Signal to Noise*, issue No. 40

Lectures and Presentations

- 2022 "CubeFest 2022: Afrofuturism in Immersive Music" Keynote speaker, Moss Art, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA
2022 "Prime Meridian Unconference" Workshop presenter, Vera List Center, New School, New York

- 2020 "Policing the Jig" Interviewed by Sarah McConnell, *With Good Reason* radio show, Virginia Humanities, Charlottesville, VA
- 2019 "Sun Ra – utomjordisk jazzmusiker med kosmisk stil" Interviewed by Erik Sjölin, *Stil* radio show, Sveriges Radio, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2015 "Affect and Myth" Sun Ra-based book talk for performance art open house, Spark Contemporary Art Space, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY
- 2015 "To: Pluto" public gallery talk with Lisa Messeri and Cauleen Smith, discussion of the cultural and scientific significance of exoplanetary bodies, hosted by Sediment Arts, Richmond, VA
- 2015 "Sun Ra: Astro Black Mythology & Black Resistance" keynote address, Logan Center for the Arts, University of Chicago
- 2014 "JAZZforum: Sun Ra in Century 21" Felix E. Grant Jazz Archives, Learning Resources Division, University of the District of Columbia, Washington, DC
- 2012 "Ghost Dance Generation" ArchiTEXTure Conference: Composing and Constructing in Digital Spaces, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC
- 2010 "Pedro Bell and the Visual Culture of P-Funk" James A. Porter Colloquium on African American Art, Howard University, Washington, DC
- 2004 "Garifuna Music in the Central American Nation of Belize" International Center for Transcultural Education, Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Washington, DC
- 2003 "Avant-Garde Jazz and the African Ideal" Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington, DC
- 1995 "Necessity is the Mothership of Invention" Association for Recorded Sound Collections, United States Library of Congress, Washington, DC
- 1994 "Introduction to Sun Ra" Jazz on Film Series, United States Library of Congress, Washington, DC

Recordings

- 2022 "Jazz Codes" wrote and performed poetic closing track on Moor Mother release, Anti-Records
- 2022 as Bushmeat Sound System, 29 solo, ensemble, and collaborative Bandcamp releases since 2012
- 2019 "Blacks' Myths II" wrote and performed poetic additions to Luke Stewart recording, Atlantic Rhythms

Video/Film

- 2013 "The Scholars" Interviewed about Sun Ra book project by scholar-activist E. Ethelbert Miller, studios of WUDC, University of District of Columbia.
- 2007 "Stranger: Bernie Worrell On Earth" On-screen appearance as quoted source in documentary film on P-Funk and Talking Heads keyboardist, Directed by Philip Di Fiore

Awards/Grants

- 2021 Down to Earth Residency, Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, GPS-facilitated, site specific oral history sound art project, supported by National Parks Service, Caandor Labs, and Capital Fringe, Washington, DC competitive award, systemic racism and marginalized discourses of place
- 2020 Black Sound Artist Grant, Voices of the Valley, Fairview, WV competitive award and festival invitation
- 2003 Curriculum Development Grant, Driskell Center for the Study of the African Diaspora, University of Maryland, College Park, MD funding to create an undergraduate honors seminar exploring radical musical subcultures of the African Diaspora



School of Art
College of Visual and Performing Arts
4400 University Drive
MS 1C3, Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: 703-993-8898

November 14, 2022

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Thomas Stanley, I am reaching out from the George Mason University School of Art, where I have been an educator since 2003. I am currently associate professor of sound art and critical theory, the only sound specialist in a faculty of visual artists and designers. Located on a campus that is quite close to Washington, DC, our School of Art aims to educate creative professionals to be responsible contributors to society by preparing them to be agents of change in an increasingly connected, complex, and inclusive world.

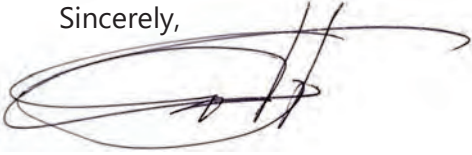
My teaching career began while I was still in grad school. I was awarded a competitive curriculum grant by the David C. Driskell Center to teach a survey course to University of Maryland undergraduate honors students called Radical Black Music and Constructions of Cosmic Order. While the term *afrofuturism* was not yet in vogue, the class encompassed a broad palette of Black futurisms with Sun Ra's work being the conceptual ballast for the entire semester.

In 2014, I published *The Execution of Sun Ra: The Mysterious Tale of a Dark Body Sent to Earth to Usher in an Unprecedented Era of Cosmic Regeneration and Happiness*. My work attempts to organize the late jazzman's idiosyncratic theories about time and music into a dynamic reading of his life as a very particular disturbance within the waters of history. My book has provided occasion for numerous public events. Chief among these was the well-attended *Along Came Ra* centennial celebration (Halloween, 2014) which culminated in a Lincoln Theater concert by the Sun Ra Arkestra (joined by the late P-Funk keyboardist Bernie Worrell). I was also invited to be the keynote speaker at a University of Chicago Sun Ra Symposium organized by musician David Boykin (May 2015). In October of 2015, my band Mind Over Matter Music Over Mind opened for the Arkestra under the direction of Marshall Allen at Baltimore's historic Otto Bar. More recently, I was the keynote speaker at Virginia Tech's Cube Fest (August 2022), a celebration of Sun Ra and afrofuturism that featured a spatialized presentation of Sun Ra's 1973 signature album "Space is the Place", remixed for delivery through the unique facilities of the Cube – a high density loudspeaker array (HDLA). At Virginia Tech, I also presented a lecture to a music technology class on Sun Ra's unique use of electronic instruments and synthesis and a lecture to a group of humanities students on Sun Ra and modernity.

My life as servant of sound has been focused where music and audio culture are most engaged in reinvention. Today, Sun Ra's ample lessons have been mined by a diverse cadre of artist-activists attempting to reinvent society and the individual and, in the process, invoke futures that transcend oppressive relations forged under white supremacy and capitalism.

I am glad to see that Stanley Nelson has stepped forward to document this movement and its debts to Sun Ra's pioneering efforts. "Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism" is a necessary work of Black cultural scholarship and necessarily an urgently needed work of social activism. What, after all, is more futuristic than a world in which Blackness incurs no social penalty, and such a world is implied just beneath the glitter, pyramids, spaceships and other sci-fi tropes by which we have come to identify the Afrofuturists.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Thomas T. Stanley, PhD

John Szwed

(b) (6)

Teaching and Research Positions:

Adjunct Senior Research Scholar, Columbia University (2015-)
Professor of Music and Jazz Studies Emeritus, Columbia University (2008-14)
Louis Armstrong Professor of Jazz Studies, Columbia University, 2003-04, 2005-06
John M. Musser Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, African-American Studies, American Studies, and Film Studies, Yale University (1982-08)
Professor of Folklore and Folklife, University of Pennsylvania (1969-1982)

Education:

Ph.D. in Anthropology (1965) Ohio State University
M.A. in Communication (1960) Ohio State University
B.Sc. in Education (1959) Ohio State University

Honors and Grants:

Jazz Journalists Association Award for Lifetime Achievement, 2019
Library of Congress Jazz Research Scholar, 2017-2018
Getty Residential Scholar, 2016
Kirkus Best Books of 2015, selection for biography, Billie Holiday: The Musician and the Myth
Jazz Journalists Association Award for Best Book of 2016 for Billie Holiday: The Musician and the Myth
Critics' Poll, JazzTimes, Best Book of 2015, for Billie Holiday: The Musician and the Myth
Mellon Foundation grants, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015
Delmas Foundation grant, 2012
Grammy, 2005 (Best Album Notes for Jelly Roll Morton: The Complete Library of Congress Recordings by Alan Lomax)
New York Public Library Books to Remember from '97: Space is the Place
Guggenheim Fellowship, 1985-86
Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Fellowship, 1975-76
Fellow, American Folklore Society
A. Whitney Griswold Grant, Yale University 1998, 1999, 2002, 2007
Whitney Humanities Center Fellow, Yale University, 1996-98
National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar Director, 1977, 1984 (on creolization), 1986 (on the history of jazz)
National Science Foundation Science Faculty Grant, 1977
American Philosophical Society Grant, 1973, 1977
National Institute of Mental Health Project Grant, 1969-74

Administrative Positions:

Director, Center for Jazz Studies, Columbia University, 2011-2014
Editor-in-Chief, JazzStudiesOnline.org, Columbia University 2005-2014
Acting Chair, Department of Anthropology, Yale University (1996, 1999)
Acting Chair, African and African-American Studies, Yale University (1994)
Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Anthropology, Yale University (1986-89, 1994)
Chair, Department of Folklore and Folklife, University of Pennsylvania, 1980-82
Co-Director (with Erving Goffman and Dell Hymes), Center for Urban Ethnography, University of Pennsylvania (1969-82)

Other:

General Editor, Jazz Perspectives Book Series, The University of Michigan Press
Member, Educational Advisory Board, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation
Member, Editorial Board, Jazz Perspectives (the journal, Rutgers University)
Member, Editorial Board, Epistrophy: La Revue du Jazz (<http://www.epistrophy.fr/?lang=en>)
Pop and Folk Editor, Jazz and Pop magazine

Publications: Books:

Cosmic Scholar: The Life and Times of Harry Smith, Anthropologist, Folklorist, Filmmaker, Painter, Folklorist, Hermetic Alchemist. . . forthcoming
Billie Holiday: The Musician and the Myth, Alan Lomax: The Man Who Recorded the World.
Blues for New Orleans: Mardi Gras and America's Creole Soul,
Crossovers: Essays on Race, Music, and American Culture.
Doctor Jazz, a book included with Jelly Roll Morton: The Complete Library of Congress
So What: The Life of Miles Davis
The Future of Jazz
Jazz 101
Space is the Place: The Lives and Times of Sun Ra.
After Africa: Slave Culture in 17th, 18th, and 19th Century British West Indies
Afro-American Folk Culture: An Annotated Bibliography
Discovering Afro-America.
Black America
Afro-American Anthropology: Contemporary Perspectives
Writings in Other Publications (several hundred articles and writings in publications such as:
Op Ed in New York Times, American Anthropologist, American Journal of Sociology, The Anthropology of Work Newsletter, Ethnomusicology, Journal of American Folklore, Language in Society, Philadelphia Inquirer, Research in African Literatures, Village Voice, Western Folklore, Boston Phoenix, Escapade, Jazz Magazine, Jazz and Pop, Jazz Review, Amazon.com (CD notes), Bookforum, The Wire, Jazziz, The Ohio State Lantern.

Writer, Performer, Consultant for Media:

Television, Radio:

Performer, Sun Ra Centenary: BBC Broadcasts BBC Radio 4, 2015
Performer, Brother From Another Planet: The Sun Ra Story, BBC 4, 2005
Performer, The Sun Ra Repatriation Project, 2998. Kapwani Kiwanga, director
Adviser, Paris is Burning (1990)
Adviser, Say Amen, Somebody (1982)
Adviser, The Loss of a Teardrop Diamond (Tennessee Williams, author, Jody Markell, dir.)

Recordings Produced:

Rashied Ali, Myra Melford, Joe McPhee, et al. The October Revolution in Jazz. Evidence 22166
Borah Bergman, Anthony Braxton, and Peter Brötzmann. Eight By Three. Mixtery 0001

11 W. Mermaid Lane
Philadelphia PA 19118
11/5/2022

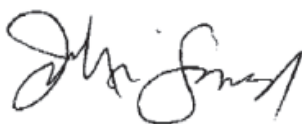
Marcia Smith
President
Firelight Media
72 Hamilton Terrace
New York, NY 10031

Dear Ms. Smith:

I'm very happy to say that I'd like to join your efforts to create a film on Sun Ra and Afrofuturism by serving as an NEH Humanities Scholar. As the only biographer of Sun Ra, how could I resist a chance to be involved with filmmakers as distinguished as Firelight Media? Incidentally, though I may have written the only life history of Ra, as I note in the new edition of *Space is the Place* there have been seven other books about Ra in the last fifteen years and hundreds of articles in print and online about Ra as father of Afrofuturism, as Black modernist, poet, artist, musician, composer, philosopher, Biblical scholar, science fiction author, utopian thinker and more. That's a lot of words for one man, but he was a man of words, and he and his Arkestra were visual and sonic above all, and a new film on them that focuses on their influence is needed and welcome.

So, yes, count me in. It's an exciting idea and its time is now.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Szwed". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being more prominent than the last name "Szwed".

John Szwed
Adjunct Senior Research Scholar, Columbia University
Professor of Music and Jazz Studies Emeritus, Columbia University
John M. Musser Professor of Anthropology, African-American Studies, American Studies, and Film
Studies Emeritus, Yale University

Attached: Szwed cv

Paul Youngquist
paul.youngquist@colorado.edu

POSITIONS Professor emeritus of English
University of Colorado Boulder (2009-2021)

Professor of English
Penn State University, University Park (1988-2008)

EDUCATION Ph.D., University of Virginia (1988)

PUBLICATIONS (selected):

Books:

A Pure Solar World: Sun Ra and the Birth of Afrofuturism. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016. Audiobook, 2019. Paperback, 2023.

Reviews: *Downbeat, The Wire, Rain Taxi, Vice.com, PopMatters, Literary Hub, The Austin Chronicle, Public Seminar, The Free Jazz Collective, thedustygroove, Jazz Right Now, Correspondences, Motown Review of Art, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Booklist*

Honors: Marfield Prize for Arts Writing (finalist), Colorado Book Award (finalist), Prose Award for Music and the Performing Arts (honorable mention), Woodward Pope Award for criticism (CU English Department)

Cyberfiction: After the Future. New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2010.

Monstrosities: Bodies and British Romanticism. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Madness and Blake's Myth. University Park: Penn State Press, 1990.

Essays, etc:

My Music is Words and My Words are Music: A Celebration of Sun Ra's Poetry. Liner notes. Omni Records (forthcoming). LP.

“Overtones: A Collage.” On Don Cherry. *SubStance* (forthcoming).

“Life After Empathy: On Philip K. Dick and *Blade Runner 2049*.” *The Paris Review—The Daily*.
<https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2017/10/23/life-after-empathy-on-blade-runner-2049/>

“Satellites are Spinning: Notes on a Sun Ra Poem.” *The Paris Review—The Daily*.
www.theparisreview.org/blog/2017/08/03/satellites-are-spinning-notes-on-a-sun-ra-poem/.

“Black Romanticism: A Manifesto.” *Studies in Romanticism* 56 (2017): 3-14.

“Remembering Queen Nanny.” *small axe salon* 21 (February 2016).
<http://smallaxe.net/wordpress3/discussions/2016/03/01/sx-salon-21-february-2016/>.

“In the Wake.” *Cultural Critique* 90 (2015): 148-58.

“Stats of Exception: *Watchmen* and Nixon’s NSC.” *Postmodern Culture* 23.2 (2013).
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v023/23.2.youngquist.html.

Book Chapters:

“Maps Without Territories: Disappearing Trelawney Town.” *Romantic Cartographies*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. 271-291.

“Accidental Histories.” *Theorizing Fieldwork*. Eds. Shalini Puri and Deborah Ann Castillo. New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2016. 215-238.

Review:

Sun Ra’s Chicago: Afrofuturism and the City. By William Sites. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020. *American Literary History* 34.3 (2022), 170-173.
<https://academic.oup.com/alh/article/34/3/1270/6651805>

Scholarly Edition:

Marcus Rainsford. *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013. With Grégory Pierrot.

Collections (editor):

Race Romanticism and the Atlantic. Burlington: Ashgate Press, 2013.

Gorgeous Beasts: Animal Bodies in Historical Perspective. University Park: Penn State University Press, 2012. With Joan B. Landes and Paula Young Lee.

Special Issues (editor):

“Essays in Honor of Colonel Frank Lumsden.” *Social and Economic Studies*. Spring 2018. With Frances Botkin.

“Black Romanticism.” *Studies in Romanticism*. Spring 2017. With Joel Pace.

General Editor:

Romantic Circles (<https://romantic-circles.org/>): a refereed scholarly website devoted to the study of Romantic-era literature and culture.

RECENT AWARDS

Professor of Distinction, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Colorado Boulder, 2021
CU Boulder Faculty Assembly Excellence Award in Research, 2018



University of Colorado **Boulder**

28 December 2022

Marcia Smith
President
Firelight Media

Dear Marcia Smith,

I am writing in support of NEH funding for the documentary film *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*. I'm a humanities scholar and have written extensively on the history of slavery and Black resistance in the Caribbean, specifically Jamaica. I'm also the author of *A Pure Solar World: Sun Ra and the Birth of Afrofuturism*, published by the University of Texas Press in 2016. My aim there was twofold: to emphasize the social agenda of a masterly but outré jazz musician, and to throw light on a neglected aspect of his creative work, his poetry. Sun Ra's music and words both provide inspiration for today's Afrofuturist artists, whose work follows his example in imagining new possibilities and better worlds for Black people. All the more reason, then, to examine the full range of his artistic expression with the seriousness due a true master.

The prospect of a documentary film that pursues similar ends is exciting and important for many reasons, but for me three stand out. First, Sun Ra deserves to be as widely celebrated as Duke Ellington or Leonard Bernstein. His life is just plain inspiring. Born Herman Blount in Birmingham in 1914, he reinvented himself as Sun Ra from Saturn, a being without human heritage but master of its highest artform, music. He refused to be limited by the historical accident of living as a Black man in segregated America, composing music that serves as a vehicle envisioning better worlds. This utopian prospect animates everything Sun Ra creates. His music and poetry alike proclaim a transformative message that remains as forceful today as when he first conceived it during the fifties and sixties in Chicago. Audiences today seem to prefer superheroes to great activist-artists, Wakanda to Chicago's South Side. That Sun Ra lived and left behind myriad compositions and performances deserves celebration as a superhuman achievement. A documentary devoted to that end can only enrich the world.

Second, Sun Ra's achievement raises—and answers—crucial questions about race. “Now's the time” to face such issues with candor and imagination. The allusion to Charlie Parker here is purposeful, because even bebop, as a form of cultural politics, required deep involvement in an industry run by whites. Not Sun Ra's music. Its DIY production proved that Blacks could manage the music business on their own—a case for Black agency made by making records. Approaching race in less political than transcendental terms (“Black-ness,” in the argot of this NEH proposal), Sun Ra avoids the twin pitfalls of separatism and assimilation, dangers that dog Black Power and Civil Rights respectively. Black-ness becomes a cosmic quality that, while not

historically or even culturally available to whites, nevertheless bespeaks a transformative wisdom that makes better worlds possible for all. As he writes in a poem entitled “The Outer Darkness,” “I speak of a different kind of Blackness, the kind / That the world does not know, the kind that the world / Will never understand.” Sun Ra’s music announces the wisdom of Black-ness to all who have ears to hear.

Third, a pedagogical purpose runs through everything Sun Ra does. *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* extends his work as a teacher to a new generation of “pupils.” People nowadays learn as much from movie and computer screens as teachers in the classroom. Sun Ra understood the power of such media. The film *Space is the Place*, built around his gnomonic wisdom, serves as an extended cinematic lecture, educating its audience in his cosmic message. Today’s Afrofuturists are Sun Ra’s star students, and they work at the forefront of contemporary Black art, envisioning a better tomorrow. *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism* faces the exciting opportunity of introducing this visionary movement to a broad audience. The film’s rich variety of contextual material promises to educate its viewers about both Sun Ra’s reinvention of himself and Afrofuturism’s re-creation of the world.

I’m deeply excited by this project and its potential to promote Sun Ra’s message and inspire new visions for better worlds.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Youngquist". The signature is stylized with loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul Youngquist
Professor of Distinction emeritus



Irwin Chusid

exclusive representation: Sun Ra LLC
PO Box 6258 • Hoboken, New Jersey 07030 USA
201-653-1063 • Irwin@SunRa.com

Ms. Marcia Smith
President
Firelight Media
72 Hamilton Terrace
New York, NY 10031

12 November 2022

Dear Ms. Smith,

I am the exclusive administrator for Sun Ra LLC (SRLLC), comprised of the lawful heirs and rights beneficiaries of the late Sun Ra (Herman Poole Blount). SRLLC hereby expresses our cooperation and support for the Stanley Nelson film project, *Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism*.

We believe Mr. Nelson's film will play an important role in expanding public awareness of the creative work, adventurous life and maverick ideas of Sun Ra, one of America's most important yet overlooked artists.

As rightsholders, Sun Ra LLC can and will issue licenses for the use in the film of Sun Ra's recorded and visual works, including Saturn Records album art and footage from the motion picture *Space is the Place*. We will extend all resources at our disposal in order to help achieve the success of Mr. Nelson's project.

Sincerely,

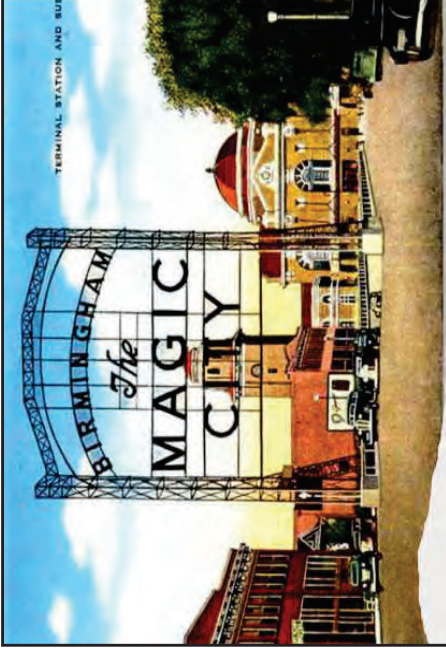
Irwin Chusid

Attachment 8: Images

1. Herman Poole Blount who became recognized around the world as Sun Ra
2. Birmingham, Alabama, the "Magic City" of his birth
3. "Sonny" Blount's early days as a professional musician
4. Herman Poole Blount refuses to serve in WWII
5. He moves to Chicago and changes his name
6. Sun Ra and Alton Abraham form Thmei Research
7. The dawn of the Space Age and creation of El Saturn Research
8. Sun Ra and the New York avant-garde scene
9. El Saturn Research album art
10. Sun Ra takes the Arkestra to Egypt
11. The Arkestra tours the world
12. Sun Ra's elaborate shows become "cosmo dramas"
13. Sun Ra's "earth departure" in 1993
14. Mark Dery coins the term "Afrofuturism"
15. Marshall Allen rebuilds the Sun Ra Arkestra, which continues to tour the world
16. "The living future" in the work of Afrofuturist musicians and filmmakers
17. A new generation of scholarship about Sun Ra
18. Afrofuturism is a global movement
19. Carnegie Hall holds a citywide Afrofuturism Festival in 2022



1. The uniquely talented composer, musician, poet, philosopher and performer known the world over as Sun Ra.



Herman Poole Blount, b. 1914



2. He was born Herman Poole Blount, 1914 in Birmingham, AL, one of the most segregated cities on the planet called “The Magic City” for its rapid economic growth. He was known to friends and family as “Sonny.”

MAKING NAME IN RADIO WORLD



Xmas Nite Dance

Wednesday, December 25, 8 O'Clock

The Rhythm Four

With **SONNY BLOUNT** and His Electric Solovox—Guest
Artist Miss **VIVIAN BREWSTER**, of A. & M. Club,
Cleveland, O.
(Birmingham's Own)

Table Reservations Admission 50c

Starring

JAZZBO WILLIAMS

Ace Comedian

CHICK The Prince of
Rug Cutters

JIMMIE BURNS, Vocalist
MME. SONJA, Exotic Shake Dancer

SONNY BLOUNTS

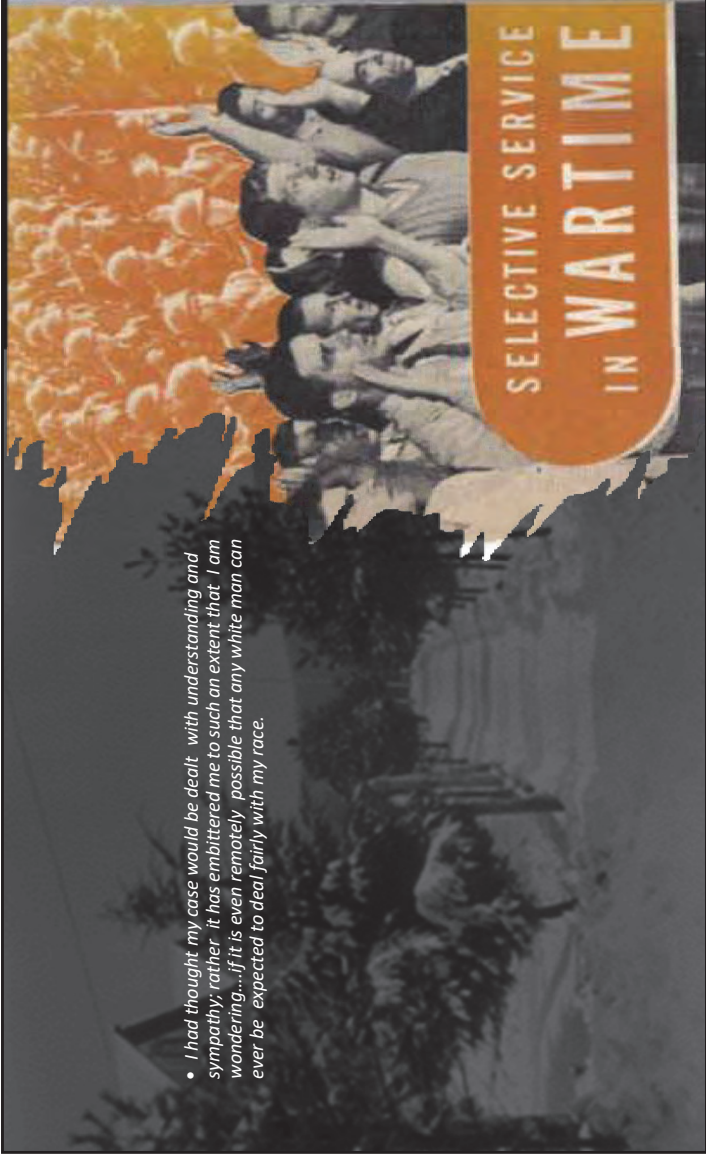
SOLO VOX BAND

All on one show at

CLUB CONGO—DINE—DANCE

Located on So. Bess. Highway opposite Cement Plant,
or ride So. Bess. Car No. 1; get off at Riley Station


3. Sonny was an A student, musical prodigy, and began to make a name for himself with his own bands in Alabama and touring surrounding states.

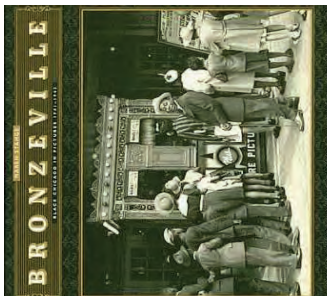


- *I had thought my case would be dealt with understanding and sympathy; rather it has embittered me to such an extent that I am wondering....if it is even remotely possible that any white man can ever be expected to deal fairly with my race.*


4. Sonny's career was interrupted when he was drafted for WWII, declared himself a Conscientious Objector, was imprisoned then sent to a civilian service camp in snowy Pennsylvania.

Johnny "Guitar" Watson
SUN-RA & His 8 Rays of Jazz
 DR. JO JO ADAMS, M.C.
MILES DAVIS OPENING
 MAR. 7
Chicago's? Show Lounge
 (Formerly Beige Room)
6412 S. Cottage Gr. MU.4-6400

2 GREAT BANDS :-
SUN-RA & His 8 Rays of Jazz
JUAN SOLER "The Mambo King"
 PLUS THE 5 ECHOS
WARI MACOS Cuban Dance - ROMONA The Girl From Trinidad
 REE Mambo Lessons Mon. & Tues. Nite
 IAWN DANCE Every Monday Morning 7 A.M. T
 W/ CATER TO CLUB BANQUETS
 The Incredible BILLY GAMBEL, M.C., Singing, Dancing, Comedy
 AT CHICAGO'S

BIRDLAND
(Formerly Beige Room)
6412 S. Cottage Gr. MU.4-6400



BRONZEVILLE
THE GREAT ROOMS OF THE GREAT CITY



5. A Black pacifist had no place in segregated Birmingham and in 1946 he moved to Chicago's Southside, "Bronzeville," where there were more than 70 music venues. There he legally changed his name to Le Sony'r Ra and formed his own bands as Sun-Ra.



6. Together with Alton Abraham, Sun Ra founded Thmei Research, a secret society of street intellectuals combining Egyptology, theosophy, numerology, religion, and the occult into a community of support for Chicago's Black artists. Their ideas were both apart of and apart from Black Nationalists currents pulsing through Chicago at the time.



*I and my musicians are musical astronauts.
We sail the galaxies through the medium of
sound, our audience with us where we go
whether they want to or not.*



7. The 1950s marked the Dawn of the Space Age as reflected in the music and dress of the Sun Ra Arkestra. Abraham and Sun Ra also created El Saturn Research, one of the first Black-owned and artist-owned recording and publishing companies, promising "Beta Music for Beta People for a Beta World."



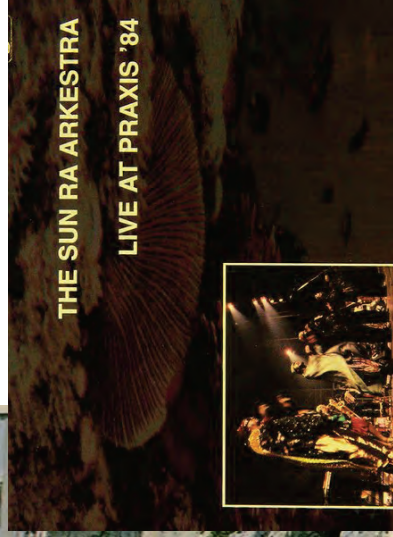
8. Moving to New York, Sun Ra became increasingly famous in the avant-garde and the Black Arts movements, scoring the music for Amiri Baraka's play "Black Mass," making a joint appearance with composer John Cage at a Coney Island theatre and even appearing on the cover of Rolling Stone.



9. Sun Ra was able to escape commercial pressure and publish his own music in more than 100 self-released LPs and 45rpm records, many with covers hand-painted by his musicians, to keep the Arkestra alive and touring.



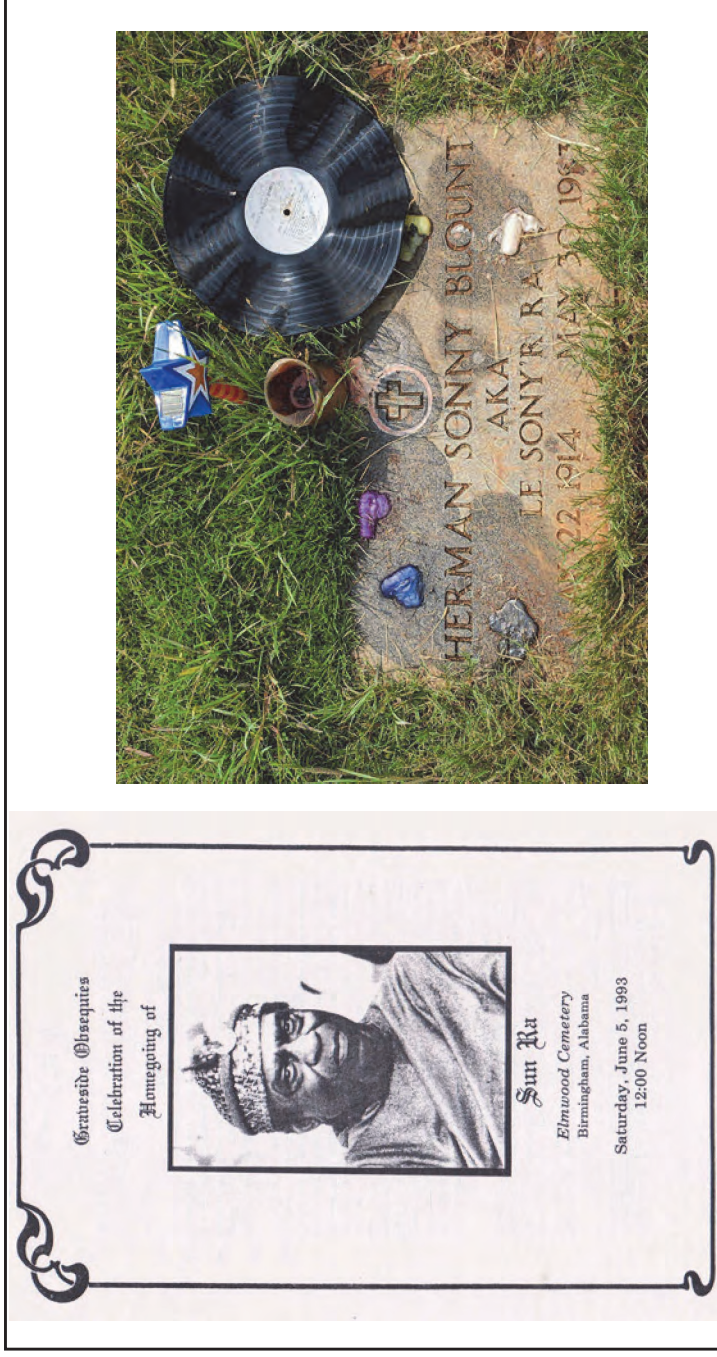
10. In 1971 Sun Ra took the entire Arkestra—musicians, dancers and light crew—for their first trip to Egypt where they performed in multiple venues and filmed themselves playing and dancing for the pyramids.



11. From the 1970s on the Sun Ra Arkestra traveled the world over, with as many as 30 or more musicians, dancers, and heavy African percussion.



12. Their self-made costumes became more and more elaborate as their performances became “cosmo dramas” mixing music, dance, a kind of hip-hop singing to convey Sun Ra’s ideas about the planet, redemption and the promise of other worlds better than this one. He had learned early on in his career about the importance of entertaining and had an uncanny ability to tailor the Arkestra’s presentations to each audience by mixing big band classics, genre-defying free jazz and even Walt Disney tunes.



13. Extensive touring took its toll on Sun Ra, who suffered a series of strokes. In 1993 he returned to Birmingham where he died and was buried in Elmwood Cemetery. Weeks before his death he told band members that their mission was important and that the show must go on. A small group of his musicians sang at his burial before catching a plane back to New York for a memorial concert at the Bottom Line in New York.

MARK DERY

BLACK TO THE FUTURE: INTERVIEWS WITH SAMUEL R. DELANY,

GREG TATE, AND TRICIA ROSE

[I]f all records told the same tale—then the lie passed into history and became truth. “Who controls the past,” ran the Party slogan, “controls the future; who controls the present controls the past.” —George Orwell

There is nothing more galvanizing than the sense of a cultural past.

—Alain Locke

Yo, bust this, Black

To the Future

Back to the past

History is a mystery 'cause it has

All the info

You need to know

Where you're from

Why'd you come and

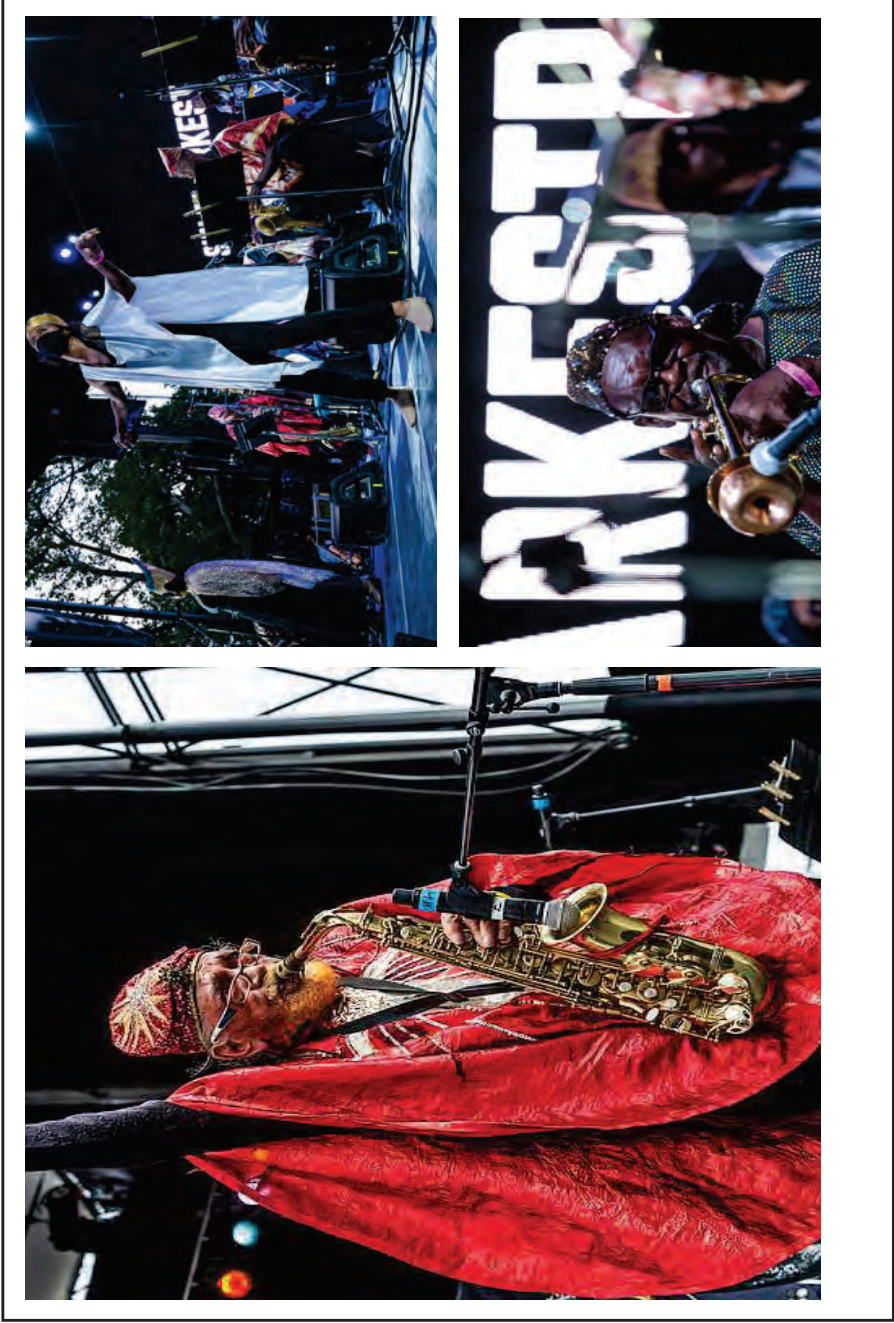
That'll tell you where you're going.

—Def Jef

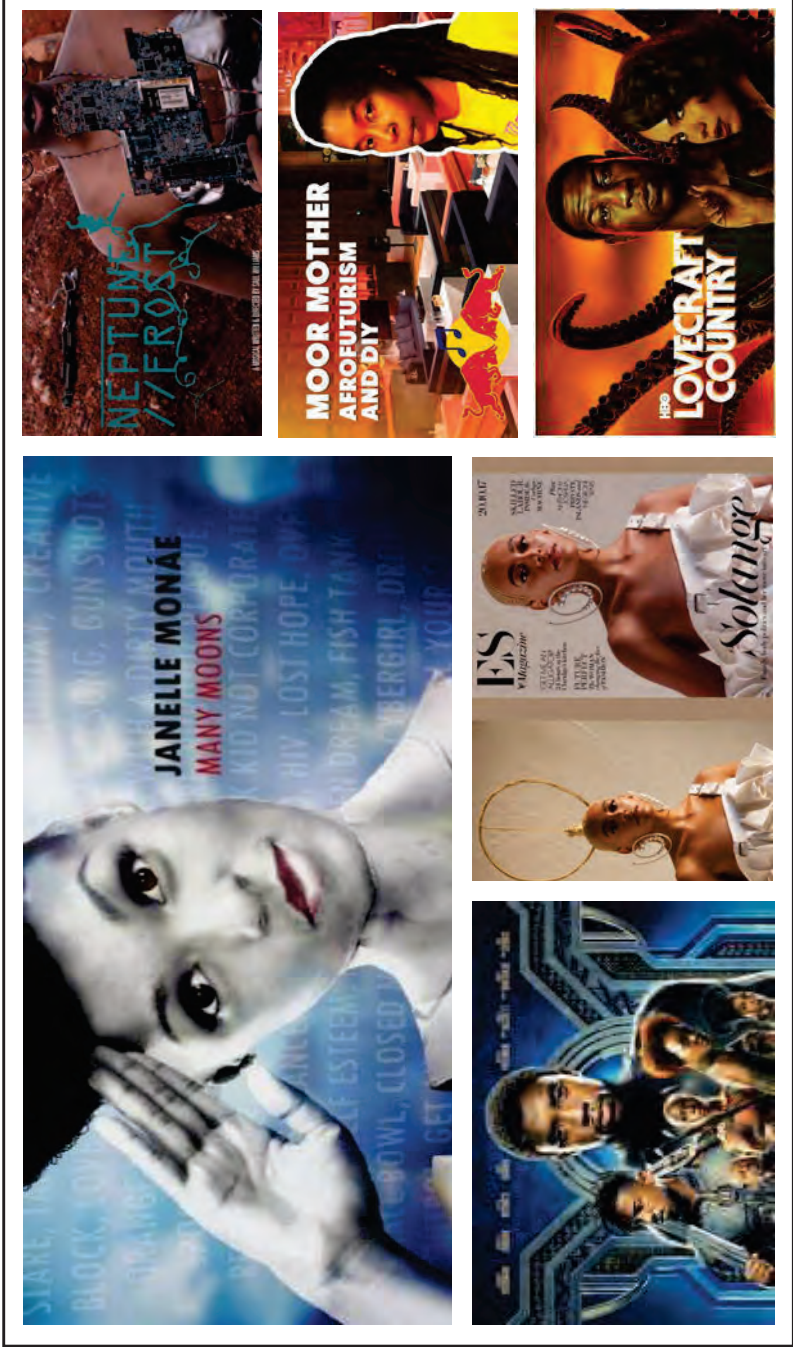
The interviews that follow began with a conundrum: Why do so few African Americans write science fiction, a genre whose close encounters with the Other—the stranger in a strange land—would seem uniquely suited



14. The year Sun Ra died, cultural critic Mark Dery, wrote an essay “Black to the Future” in which he introduced the term “Afrofuturism” and credited Sun Ra’s “...intergalactic big-band jazz” as a primal force.



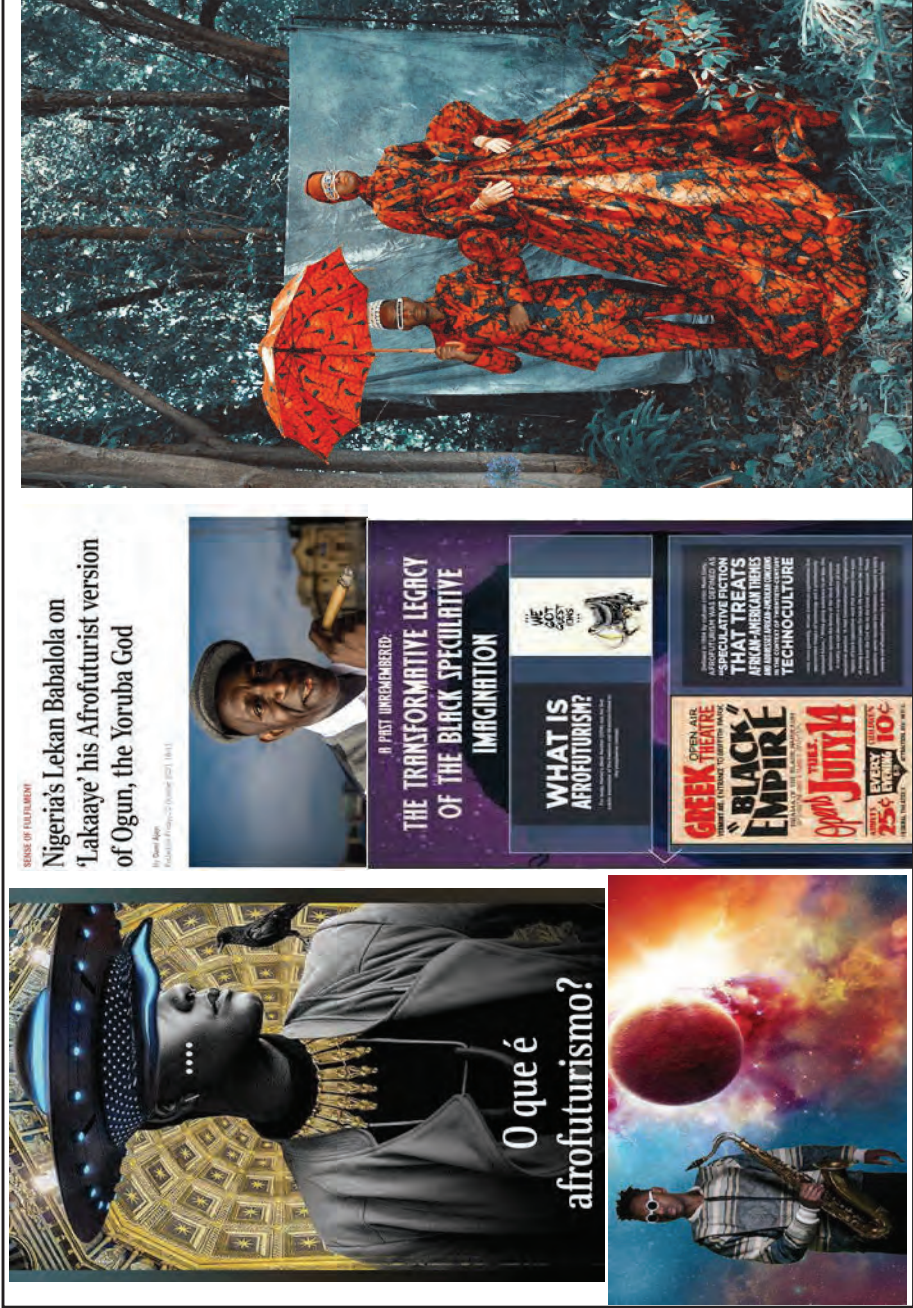
15. Miraculously, the Arkestra survived Sun Ra's death as Marshall Allen, who had joined in 1957, rebuilt the big band, and at age 98 still leads it today.



16. Sun Ra's concept of the living future is alive in the work of artists like Janelle Monáe, Solange, and Moor Mother as well as film and television productions like *Black Panther*, *Neptune Frost* and *Lovecraft Country*



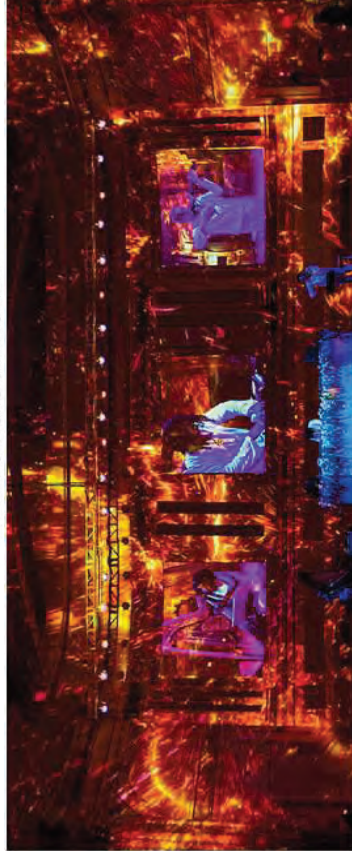
17. A new generation of scholarship explores Sun Ra the man, his self-created myth, his vast artistic output, and his influence on today's Afrofuturism movement.



18. Afrofuturism has become a global movement, with music, film, literature, college courses and crosscurrents in Brazil, London, Africa and beyond.



Afrofuturism



19. In 2022, The Sun Ra Arkestra returned to headline Carnegie Hall's three-month, citywide "...journey to the world of Afrofuturism," with sold-out concerts by artists like Flying Lotus and some 50 parallel events.

RESEARCH & RELATED BUDGET - Budget Period 1

OMB Number: 4040-0001
Expiration Date: 12/31/2022

UEI: (b) (4) Enter name of Organization: Firelight Media

Budget Type: Project Subaward/Consortium Budget Period: 1 Start Date: 11/01/2023 End Date: 10/01/2024

A. Senior/Key Person

Prefix	First	Middle	Last	Suffix	Base Salary (\$)	Months			Requested Salary (\$)	Fringe Benefits (\$)	Funds Requested (\$)
						Cal.	Acad.	Sum.			
Mr.	Stanley		Nelson		(b) (6)				(b) (6)	0.00	(b) (6)
Project Role: PD/PI											
	Christine		Turner		(b) (6)				(b) (6)	(b) (6)	(b) (6)
Project Role: Director/Producer											
	Bradford		Smith		(b) (6)				(b) (6)	0.00	(b) (6)
Project Role: Consulting Producer/Researcher											
	TBD		TBD		(b) (6)				(b) (6)	(b) (6)	(b) (6)
Project Role: Associate Producer											
	TBD		TBD		(b) (6)				(b) (6)	(b) (6)	(b) (6)
Project Role: Editor											

Additional Senior Key Persons: 1241-NEH RR Sun Ra Budget FINAL View Attachment Delete Attachment Add Attachment Total Funds requested for all Senior Key Persons in the attached file 324,720.00 Total Senior/Key Person 857,760.00

B. Other Personnel

Number of Personnel	Project Role	Months			Requested Salary (\$)	Fringe Benefits (\$)	Funds Requested (\$)
		Cal.	Acad.	Sum.			
	Post Doctoral Associates						
	Graduate Students						
	Undergraduate Students						
	Secretarial/Clerical						
14	Additional Production Staff			403,629.00	48,435.00	452,064.00	
14	Total Number Other Personnel				Total Other Personnel	452,064.00	
					Total Salary, Wages and Fringe Benefits (A+B)	1,309,824.00	

C. Equipment Description

List items and dollar amount for each item exceeding \$5,000

Equipment item Funds Requested (\$)

Additional Equipment: Add Attachment

Total funds requested for all equipment listed in the attached file

Total Equipment

D. Travel

1. Domestic Travel Costs (Incl. Canada, Mexico and U.S. Possessions) Funds Requested (\$)

2. Foreign Travel Costs

Total Travel Cost

E. Participant/Trainee Support Costs

1. Tuition/Fees/Health Insurance Funds Requested (\$)

2. Stipends

3. Travel

4. Subsistence

5. Other

Number of Participants/Trainees Total Participant/Trainee Support Costs

F. Other Direct Costs

Funds Requested (\$)

1. Materials and Supplies	
2. Publication Costs	
3. Consultant Services	
4. ADP/Computer Services	
5. Subawards/Consortium/Contractual Costs	
6. Equipment or Facility Rental/User Fees	
7. Alterations and Renovations	
8. Production and Staff Expenses	101,230.00
9. Travel and Location Expenses	56,560.00
10. Post Production	450,000.00
11. General & Facilities	123,500.00
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	
16.	
17.	
Total Other Direct Costs	731,290.00

G. Direct Costs

Funds Requested (\$)
2,041,114.00

Total Direct Costs (A thru F)

H. Indirect Costs

Indirect Cost Type	Indirect Cost Rate (%)	Indirect Cost Base (\$)	Funds Requested (\$)
Total Indirect Costs			

Cognizant Federal Agency
(Agency Name, POC Name, and POC Phone Number)

I. Total Direct and Indirect Costs

Funds Requested (\$)
2,041,114.00

Total Direct and Indirect Institutional Costs (G + H)

J. Fee

Funds Requested (\$)

K. Total Costs and Fee

Funds Requested (\$)
2,041,114.00

L. Budget Justification

(Only attach one file.)

1242-PF Sun Ra Production Budget (FINA)

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

Total Costs and Fee (I + J)

RESEARCH & RELATED BUDGET - Cumulative Budget

Section A, Senior/Key Person		857,760.00
Section B, Other Personnel		452,064.00
Total Number Other Personnel	14	
Total Salary, Wages and Fringe Benefits (A+B)		1,309,824.00
Section C, Equipment		
Section D, Travel		
1. Domestic		
2. Foreign		
Section E, Participant/Trainee Support Costs		
1. Tuition/Fees/Health Insurance		
2. Stipends		
3. Travel		
4. Subsistence		
5. Other		
6. Number of Participants/Trainees		
Section F, Other Direct Costs		731,290.00
1. Materials and Supplies		
2. Publication Costs		
3. Consultant Services		
4. ADP/Computer Services		
5. Subawards/Consortium/Contractual Costs		
6. Equipment or Facility Rental/User Fees		
7. Alterations and Renovations		
8. Other 1		101,230.00
9. Other 2		56,560.00
10. Other 3		450,000.00
11. Other 4		123,500.00
12. Other 5		
13. Other 6		
14. Other 7		
15. Other 8		
16. Other 9		
17. Other 10		

Section G, Direct Costs (A thru F)

Section H, Indirect Costs

Section I, Total Direct and Indirect Costs (G + H)

Section J, Fee

Section K, Total Costs and Fee (I + J)

2,041,114.00
2,041,114.00
2,041,114.00

Firelight Films
 Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism (w.t.)
 Production Budget
 52-Week Production & Post Schedule

BUDGET LINE	AMOUNT	UNIT	#	RATE	TOTAL	NOTES	NEH Budget Section
Production & Post Production Staff							
Executive Producer	1	flat	1	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	Oversees production and the overall creative vision, direction and execution of project	A
Director/Producer	52	weeks	1	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	Responsibilities include creative development, production, post, and delivery	A
Associate Producer	50	weeks	1	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	Helps to develop story, source talent, find filming locations, source and secure archival material. Will also assist with shoots, sourcing gear, organizing crew paperwork	B
Consulting Producer/Researcher	1	flat	1	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	Responsibilities include sourcing talent and archival, creative development, production	A
Archivist	36	weeks	1	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	This role will source all archival footage and photos and ensure proper licensing is secured and cleared for all materials	B
Production Assistant	48	weeks	1	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	Prod. & post-prod	B
Line Producer	20	weeks	0.25	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	Keeps projects on schedule, sources crews & locations, creates filming schedules, deal memos for crew, invoicing & talent release forms	B
Post Production Supervisor	13	weeks	1	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	Post-prod only	B
Editor	32	weeks	1	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	Assumes 32 weeks of offline edit	B
Assistant Editor	32	weeks	1	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	Assumes 32 weeks of offline edit	B
Advisors	10	each	1	1,000	\$10,000	Provides expertise on the subject matter of the film, and historical and cultural context on the subject	F-3
Subtotal Production & Post Production Staff					\$710,700		
Payroll Taxes @ 12%					\$66,084	Assumes primary producing staff wages via payroll	B
Total Staff & Fringes					\$776,784		
Field Production Staff & Expenses							
Camera Person / Equipment	21	days	1	3,000	\$63,000	15 days per series hr for multiple regions including NYC . Assumes camera HD package included.	F-8
Camera PA	21	days	1	180	\$3,780	16 days per series hr for multiple regions including NYC . Assumes camera HD package included.	F-8
Sound Person / Equipment	21	days	1	800	\$16,800	17 days per series hr for multiple regions including NYC	F-8
Video Wrangler	13	days	1	550	\$7,150	18 days per series hr for multiple regions including NYC	F-8
Project Drives	21	each	1	500	\$10,500	19 days per series hr for multiple regions including NYC	F-1
Total Field Production Staff & Expenses					\$101,230		
Travel & Location Expenses							
Airfare (Producer & Director)	7	trips	2	500	\$7,000	Assumes airfare for Director & Producer at 7 trips per person	D
Hotel/Per Diem - Production	14	days	2	270	\$7,560	Based on Director & Producer travel days	D
Taxi, Uber, Lyft	1	allow	1	3,000	\$3,000	Assumes transport to/from shoot locations for interviews	D
Car/Van Rental	30	days	1	150	\$4,500	Assumes transport to/from shoot locations for crew and staff	D
Location Fees	15	each	1	1,500	\$22,500	Based on rental fees for 15 locations	D
Misc (Parking, Excess Baggage)	1	allow	1	4,000	\$4,000	Based on hotel, garage, meter parking costs on location	D
Location Meals	20	days	1	200	\$4,000	Based on 20 days of meals for production team	D
Production Assistant (locations)	20	days	1	200	\$4,000	On location associate producer, based on 20 days	D
Total Travel & Location Expenses					\$56,560		
Post Production							

Firelight Films
Sun Ra and the Roots of Afrofuturism (w.t.)
Production Budget
52-Week Production & Post Schedule

BUDGET LINE	AMOUNT	UNIT	#	RATE	TOTAL	NOTES	NEH Budget Section
Avid System/Edit Room #1	32	weeks	1	1,000	\$32,000	Based on rental fees for 2 edit suites for 32 weeks	F-6
Avid System/Edit Room #2	32	weeks	1	1,000	\$32,000	Based on rental fees for 2 edit suites for 32 weeks	F-6
Edit Supplies	1	allow	1	3,000	\$3,000	Assumes edit supplies & small tech purchases	F-1
IT Support/Avid Maintenance	1	allow	1	5,000	\$5,000	Assumes subscription and maintenance costs	F-4
Mix/Sound Edit	1	allow	1	20,000	\$20,000	Based on sound mix rates	F-9
Narrator	1	allow	1	12,000	\$12,000	Based on narration fee	F-9
Music Composer/Musicians/Record	1	allow	1	15,000	\$15,000	Assumes music will be written specifically for the project by a composer	F-9
Music Licensing	1	allow	1	35,000	\$35,000	Cleared for all media, worldwide, perpetuity	F-9
Transcription	1	allow	1	9,000	\$9,000	Based on transcriber rates	F-9
On-line Avid/Color Correct	90	hours	1	300	\$27,000	Assumes total online avid and color correct costs	F-9
Animation, FX & Graphics, inc. Title Sequence	1	allow	1	35,000	\$35,000	Based on original design rates series hour	F-9
Stock Footage	2,000	seconds	1	100	\$200,000	Cleared for all media, worldwide, perpetuity	F-9
Stills	500	each	1	50	\$25,000	Cleared for all media, worldwide, perpetuity	F-9
Total Post Production					\$450,000		
General & Facilities Expenses							
Accountant & Bookkeeper Fees	12	months	1	2,500	\$30,000	Assumes all production accounting from pre to post, and final deliverables	F-10
Delivery, Postage & Shipping	1	allow	1	3,000	\$3,000	Based on delivery of drives, compequipment, etc. to/from production staff	F-10
Legal Fees	1	allow	1	5,000	\$5,000	Assumes negotiation contract and review templates and clearances	F-10
Local Travel & Meetings	1	allow	1	1,000	\$1,000	Assumes food & taxis for local travel and meetings	F-10
Office Supplies	1	allow	1	3,000	\$3,000	Assumes all project office expenses	F-1
Printing & Copying	1	allow	1	2,500	\$2,500	Assumes all project printing & copying expenses throughout	F-1
Production Insurance	1	allow	1	8,000	\$8,000	Based on actuals of recent productions	F-10
Title Search & Clearance	1	allow	1	3,000	\$3,000	Assumes total fee for title search and clearance	F-10
Errors & Omissions Insurance	1	allow	1	6,000	\$6,000	Based on actual rates, and limits stipulated in contract	F-10
Production Office/Occupancy	12	months	1	4,000	\$48,000	Based on current occupancy rental rates	F-6
Research Books & CDs	1	allow	1	1,000	\$1,000	Assumes expenses for project-related research materials	F-1
Telephone & Internet	12	months	1	100	\$1,200	Assumes telephone & internet costs for production office	F-10
Utilities	12	months	1	150	\$1,800	Assumes utility costs for production office	F-10
Workers' Compensation	1	allow	1	10,000	\$10,000	Assumes primary producing staff wages via payroll	F-10
Total General & Facilities Expenses					\$123,500.00		
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET					\$1,508,074		

RESEARCH & RELATED BUDGET - Budget Period 1

OMB Number: 4040-0001
Expiration Date: 12/31/2022

UEI: Enter name of Organization:

Budget Type: Project Subaward/Consortium **Budget Period: 1** Start Date: End Date:

A. Senior/Key Person

Prefix	First	Middle	Last	Suffix	Base Salary (\$)	Months		Requested Salary (\$)	Fringe Benefits (\$)	Funds Requested (\$)
						Cal.	Acad. Sum.			
	Stanley		Nelson		(b) (6)			(b) (6)	0	(b) (6)

Project Role:

Additional Senior Key Persons: Total Funds requested for all Senior Key Persons in the attached file:

Total Senior/Key Person:

B. Other Personnel

Number of Personnel	Project Role	Months		Requested Salary (\$)	Fringe Benefits (\$)	Funds Requested (\$)
		Cal.	Acad. Sum.			
<input type="text"/>	Post Doctoral Associates	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	Graduate Students	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	Undergraduate Students	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	Secretarial/Clerical	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Total Number Other Personnel

Total Other Personnel:

Total Salary, Wages and Fringe Benefits (A+B):

C. Equipment Description

List items and dollar amount for each item exceeding \$5,000

Equipment item	Funds Requested (\$)
<input type="text"/>	0

Additional Equipment:

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Total funds requested for all equipment listed in the attached file			0
Total Equipment			0

D. Travel

	Funds Requested (\$)
1. Domestic Travel Costs (Incl. Canada, Mexico and U.S. Possessions)	56,560
2. Foreign Travel Costs	
Total Travel Cost	56,560

E. Participant/Trainee Support Costs

	Funds Requested (\$)
1. Tuition/Fees/Health Insurance	0
2. Stipends	0
3. Travel	0
4. Subsistence	0
5. Other	
<input type="text"/> Number of Participants/Trainees	0
Total Participant/Trainee Support Costs	0

F. Other Direct Costs	Funds Requested (\$)
1. Materials and Supplies	20,000
2. Publication Costs	0
3. Consultant Services	10,000
4. ADP/Computer Services	5,000
5. Subawards/Consortium/Contractual Costs	0
6. Equipment or Facility Rental/User Fees	112,000
7. Alterations and Renovations	0
8. Field Production	90,730
9. Post Production	378,000
10. General & Facilities	69,000
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	
16.	
17.	
Total Other Direct Costs	684,730

G. Direct Costs Funds Requested (\$) **1,508,074**
Total Direct Costs (A thru F)

H. Indirect Costs	Indirect Cost Type	Indirect Cost Rate (%)	Indirect Cost Base (\$)	Funds Requested (\$)
				0
Total Indirect Costs				0

Cognizant Federal Agency
 (Agency Name, POC Name, and POC Phone Number)

I. Total Direct and Indirect Costs Funds Requested (\$) **1,508,074**
Total Direct and Indirect Institutional Costs (G + H)

J. Fee Funds Requested (\$) **0**

K. Total Costs and Fee Funds Requested (\$) **1,508,074**
Total Costs and Fee (I + J)

L. Budget Justification
 (Only attach one file.)

[View Attachment](#)

[Delete Attachment](#)

[Add Attachment](#)

RESEARCH & RELATED BUDGET - Cumulative Budget

	Totals (\$)
Section A, Senior/Key Person	324,720
Section B, Other Personnel	442,064
Total Number Other Personnel	2
Total Salary, Wages and Fringe Benefits (A+B)	776,784
Section C, Equipment	
Section D, Travel	56,560
1. Domestic	
2. Foreign	
Section E, Participant/Trainee Support Costs	0
1. Tuition/Fees/Health Insurance	
2. Stipends	
3. Travel	
4. Subsistence	
5. Other	
6. Number of Participants/Trainees	
Section F, Other Direct Costs	684,730
1. Materials and Supplies	20,000
2. Publication Costs	0
3. Consultant Services	10,000
4. ADP/Computer Services	5,000
5. Subawards/Consortium/Contractual Costs	0
6. Equipment or Facility Rental/User Fees	112,000
7. Alterations and Renovations	0
8. Other 1	90,730
9. Other 2	378,000
10. Other 3	69,000
11. Other 4	
12. Other 5	
13. Other 6	
14. Other 7	
15. Other 8	
16. Other 9	
17. Other 10	

Section G, Direct Costs (A thru F)

Section H, Indirect Costs

Section I, Total Direct and Indirect Costs (G + H)

Section J, Fee

Section K, Total Costs and Fee (I + J)

1,508,074
0
1,508,074
0
1,508,074