

= Air (Stargate Universe) =

" Air " is the three @-@ part opening episode of the military science fiction television series Stargate Universe . The first two parts aired on Syfy in the United States on October 2 , 2009 , while the third part aired on October 9 . In Canada , SPACE aired the first two in tandem with Syfy . Sky1 broadcast the first two parts on October 6 , and the third on October 13 , whilst Sci Fi Australia aired the two @-@ parter on October 9 , and the third part on October 16 . " Air " was written by series creators Robert C. Cooper and Brad Wright , and was directed by Andy Mikita .

In the episode a group of evacuees from Icarus Base , an offworld human outpost that fell under attack end up on the Destiny , an Ancient starship located several billion light @-@ years from Earth . Their first problems involve the ship 's failing life support system , where the new crew are tasked to fix it . The episode features some of the well known characters from Stargate SG @-@ 1 , a previous series in the Stargate franchise . Parts of the third part are filmed on location in White Sands , New Mexico , which doubles as a desert planet . The first two parts were given generally positive reviews , mainly commending the cast and the style of the episode . The premiere was seen by over 2 @.@ 3 million Americans , and was considered a ratings success in Australia , Canada and the United Kingdom .

= = Plot = =

= = = Part 1 = = =

The majority of the first part takes place in flashbacks while a team of ill equipped soldiers and scientists arrive at the Destiny . Eli Wallace (David Blue) solves a mathematical equation in an online computer game , planted there by Stargate Command . For his achievement , Dr. Nicholas Rush (Robert Carlyle) and General Jack O 'Neill (Richard Dean Anderson) recruit Wallace to the Icarus program , which is attempting to dial a nine @-@ chevron address with the Stargate . Wallace 's solution is the key to controlling the power levels for the Gate . He is taken aboard the Hammond , an Earth Daedalus @-@ class starship , to be taken to the planet where Icarus is set up . During the journey , he meets Chloe Armstrong (Elyse Levesque) , daughter of Senator Alan Armstrong (Christopher McDonald) .

At the top @-@ secret Icarus Base , the group is introduced to Colonel Everett Young (Louis Ferreira) , Colonel David Telford (Lou Diamond Phillips) , and First Lieutenant Matthew Scott (Brian J. Smith) . Wallace 's solution is tested but fails to establish a lock . During dinner , three Ha 'tak vessels , believed to be under the control of the Lucian Alliance , attack the planet . An evacuation is begun while the Hammond which is manned by Colonel Samantha Carter (Amanda Tapping) and a squadron of F @-@ 302s led by Colonel Telford battle the enemy . Rush , desperate to see his project succeed , enlists Wallace 's aid in figuring out what went wrong . Wallace suggests that the final symbol of the address is wrong , and that they should use the symbol for Earth . Rush aborts the dialing sequence to Earth , arguing that the energy release from the exploding planet could follow them through the Gate , and tests the theory , which succeeds . With the planet 's unstable core about to go critical and lacking any other means of escape , the remaining survivors in the base (roughly 80 people) are forced to risk heading to an unknown destination . The planet explodes shortly after everyone is evacuated , destroying the three Ha 'tak vessels . The Hammond survives , but the fate of those in the base is a mystery to Stargate Command .

= = = Part 2 = = =

The unlikely expedition team ends up on the Destiny , an Ancient starship located billions of light @-@ years from Earth . The ship jumps to FTL shortly after the Stargate shuts down . Rush uses an Ancient communication device to contact Stargate command , taking control of Bill Lee (Bill Dow) .

When he returns , Rush claims that O 'Neill put him in charge of the expedition , though the others are not quick to believe him . Meanwhile , the ship , having suffered millennia of wear and tear , has a failing life support system and an inadequately sealed hull breach in one of the shuttles , which can be sealed only from inside the shuttle . Senator Armstrong learns of this and , already badly injured , sacrifices his life to seal the shuttle off and buy the team time . However , the main life support is not so easily fixed . The CO2 scrubbers are decayed beyond repair , and within a day carbon dioxide poisoning will kill everyone . The Destiny , apparently aware of the problem , drops out of FTL and dials the Stargate to a desert planet with the necessary materials to repair the scrubbers . Four other locations are listed but locked out by the dialing computer . A 12 @-@ hour countdown begins , at the end of which the Destiny will continue on its journey automatically .

= = = Part 3 = = =

On the desert planet , the search begins for a suitable source of lime to filter the air on Destiny . The sand itself has a small concentration of calcite , but not enough to be useful , so the team starts looking for a dry lake bed , which should have heavy deposits of lime . The group splits into two : Rush , Scott and Ronald Greer (Jamil Walker Smith) form one group , while Wallace leads the remainder in a different direction . After several failed tests , those in Wallace 's group give up on the search , instead intending to try out the Stargate addresses the Destiny rejected . When Wallace informs the others , Scott sends Rush and Greer back to stop them while he continues searching . They make it back in time to stop Franklin (Mark Burgess) , the member carrying the dialing remote , but the other two make it through . Rush is vehemently against the idea of exploring the other addresses , believing that the ship locked them out for a reason , and several failed attempts to contact the two lost expedition members seem to support his concerns .

On the ship , Chloe and Young use the communication stones to contact Earth , allowing Chloe to inform her mother of her situation and Senator Armstrong 's death . Young , meanwhile , is encouraged by O 'Neill to repair the ship ; in spite of his protests that their expedition is not cut out for it , O 'Neill insists that no one really is ready for their kind of work .

In his search for the lime , Scott discovers a strange , swirling cloud of dust that absorbs moisture . He follows it until he collapses in front of a lake bed . He has a brief hallucination where he engages in a spiritual conversation with a priest he knew on Earth . Meanwhile , the cloud moves up to him and condenses into water , waking him . Realizing what he 's found , Scott shovels as much of the lime as possible into his bag and makes his way to the Gate . Greer , having set out to look for him , finds him along the way and helps carry the lime . Wallace sticks his arm into the wormhole to delay the countdown . The team returns with the lime successfully , which is used to repair the CO2 scrubbers . In the end , a recovering Scott tells Chloe that his parents and the priest died when he was young , and that the best way to deal with the grief is to keep moving forward . As everyone starts to breathe easier , a Nakai fighter detaches itself from the Destiny .

= = Production = =

= = = Conception = = =

" Air " first surfaced in December 2008 as a working title for the opening episode of Universe , where it was suggested to be a three @-@ parter , according to executive producer Joseph Mallozzi . With casting concerned , several of the previous SG @-@ 1 characters made an appearance for the series premiere , including Michael Shanks , who reprises his role as Doctor Daniel Jackson in a cameo , Richard Dean Anderson as General Jack O 'Neill , Gary Jones as Walter Harriman , Amanda Tapping as Samantha Carter , Bill Dow as Doctor Bill Lee and Martin Christopher as Kevin Marks . Christopher McDonald of Happy Gilmore and Requiem for a Dream fame made a " pivotal " guest appearance as Senator Alan Armstrong , father of series regular , Chloe Armstrong (Elyse Levesque) . Another guest star is Ona Grauer , previously known for playing the Ancient Ayiana in

Stargate SG @-@ 1 's " Frozen " and Stargate Atlantis 's " Rising " .

= = = Filming = = =

" Air " was directed by Andy Mikita . When filming the first three episodes , Brad Wright and Robert C. Cooper decided to hire the Director of Photography from The Shield . The shooting for the episode started on February 18 , 2009 . The show is filmed on stages 2 , 4 (Destiny set) and 5 (Icarus Base set) at The Bridge Studios Previous franchise series Stargate SG @-@ 1 and Stargate Atlantis were filmed on stage 5 and 6 . " Air (Part 3) " was filmed in and around Alamogordo , New Mexico from late April through early May 2009 . A couple of scenes were deleted from the actual outtake , the two most notable being a scene with Eli Wallace (David Blue) on the desert planet and a flashbacks scene featuring Chloe Armstrong and her mother . The game Wallace played when solving the puzzle was a preview shot of Stargate Worlds , a massively multiplayer online role @-@ playing game based on the Stargate franchise . The game was referenced throughout the pilot . The announcement of Stargate Worlds marked the first bit of news published on the game 's official website since May 26 , 2009 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings and viewership = = =

The first two parts received a total household rating of 1 @.@ 7 , which represents 2 @.@ 35 million viewers on Syfy , which was the best franchise 's season premiere since the second season premiere of Stargate Atlantis . Among the figures , 1 @.@ 32 million were viewed by adults in the 25 @-@ 54 age demographic , and 1 @.@ 12 million among the 18 @-@ 49 demographic . Part 3 gathered 2 @.@ 4 million viewers , a small increase from the season premiere . In both cases , the ratings were higher than Fox 's Dollhouse , which aired on the same time slot . Plus the 7 DVR , the second part reached a household rating of 2 @.@ 1 , totalling 2 @.@ 99 million viewers , including 1 @.@ 7 million Adults 18 @-@ 49 and 1 @.@ 85 million Adults 25 @-@ 54 . This makes " Air " the most viewed Stargate episode since March 2005 .

After its premiere in Canada , the first two parts were seen by 565 @,@ 000 , which made it SPACE 's most viewed single episode in its run . This also made Stargate Universe the number 1 non @-@ sports speciality program of the day . Including the ratings from two additional airings the following day also totalled the ratings up to 2 @.@ 3 million , comparable to the US release . In the United Kingdom , the first part was seen by 1 @.@ 165 million viewers , while the second part were seen by 1 @.@ 061 million , placing Stargate Universe the first and second most viewed series the week it aired on Sky1 , and the UK 's highest Stargate audience in five years . The third part was seen by 765 @,@ 000 viewers , again making it the most watched programme on the multichannel TV station . The Sci Fi Channel Australia premiere of the episode attracted 149 @,@ 000 viewers , becoming the second most watched episode that week , while being bested by a soccer match .

= = = Critical reception = = =

Reviews of the premiere were generally positive . According to Metacritic , which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream critics , the premiere has received a " generally favorable " score of 61 , based on 9 reviews . In all three cases the film ranks lowest in the series . Joseph Dilworth Jr. of Pop Culture Zoo praised the premiere of Stargate Universe , stating that it " feels less like a weekly TV series and much more like the beginning of a twenty part long form story , " and is also described as a cross between Star Trek : Voyager , Battlestar Galactica and Firefly , though the series seems to be a spiritual successor to Battlestar . Dilworth also praised the cast , stating it as " one of the finest ensemble casts I 've seen in a long time . " Curt Wagner of Chicago Now rated the episode 4 stars out of four , stating that it shares the optimism of Star Trek :

Voyager , and the grimness of Battlestar Galactica , as well as playing homage to its franchise forbears SG 1 and Atlantis , but looks and feels new . IGN reviewer Ramsey Isler gave the episode 8 out of 10 , starting his review with " Yes , it 's another Stargate show . But this might become the best of them all . " Further saying the premiere had its " own unique tone . "

Being one of the few Stargate franchise releases that were well received by major media publishers , Mike Hale from The New York Times was generally positive towards the pilot episodes , saying the Stargate franchise was " catching up " with the long running Star Trek franchise . Hale also agreed with Syfy 's promotion of it being an " edgier " Stargate . The Boston Globe reviewer Joanna Weiss also reacted positively towards the pilot episodes , saying it felt like " early Lost " , while the story arc followed the patterns of " Battlestar Galactica " . Mark Wilson from About.com gave the episode four and a half stars out of 5 , saying Universe accomplishes what Stargate Atlantis was not able to , and said it was " exceptionally well made " compared to other shows . The Pittsburgh Post - Gazette both praised the show , calling it " intriguing " , for not abandoning its premise as Star Trek : Voyager did and criticized it by pointing out that the characters spend " far too much time wandering a desert planet " in " Air (Part 3) " . The Pittsburgh Post - Gazette summarized their review by saying that , " [g] iven time , Stargate Universe may become worth watching if it develops its characters and continues to mine its premise for stories . " David Hinckley , a reviewer from The New York Daily News gave the episodes four out of five stars , saying that " Eli 's not the only one playing a high stakes game here . "

Among reviewers who were negative towards the new installments was Maureen Ryan from the Chicago Tribune . The reviewer wrote that the " gloomy , underwhelming Universe seems to have ditched many of the elements that the previous " Stargate " shows had , notably camaraderie and a sense of adventure , without adding much in the way of narrative suspense or complexity . " The only characters she felt were " worth following " were Eli Wallace (David Blue) and Nicholas Rush (Robert Carlyle) . Vince Horiuchi from The Salt Lake Tribune started the review with " Syfy Channel -- is one of the worst displays of the genre on television , " and attacked the television series , " Battlestar Galactica " . Having no interest in the previous Stargate series ' including the feature film , while not overall positive to the series , he said the cast and characters were a " little more likable and interesting . " Reviewer Laura Freis from Variety magazine concluded her review with " Sure , SGU is grittier , darker and psychologically deeper than previous versions . But so far , it 's also a lot less fun . " While negative towards the show , she called Robert Carlyle an " excellent " actor . The Hollywood Reporter noted a lack of " intelligent " and " surprising stories " and was overall negative towards Stargate Universe , and even more so on the previous Stargate franchise releases .

= = = Awards and nominations = = =

In January 2010 , the episodes were nominated for a Visual Effects Society Award for " Outstanding Visual Effects in a Broadcast Series " , against Battlestar Galactica , V , Defying Gravity and Fringe . They were also nominated for four Leo Awards in 2010 ; one resulted in a win . Mike Banas was nominated for " Best Picture Editing for a Dramatic Series " , James C. D. Robbins for " Best Production Design in a Dramatic Series " , and James Bamford for " Best Stunt Coordination in a Dramatic Series . " Mark Savelle and the special effects team won the Leo Award for " Best Visual Effects in a Dramatic Series " for their work in the episodes . In July 2010 , the visual effects team were nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Special Visual Effects , along with " Space " for the upcoming 62nd Primetime Emmy Awards .