"Help Me!" A Short History of Science Fiction Music

Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr.

DePauw University

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I began looking into science fiction in music as a larger exploration of what attracts audiences to science fiction in general. I have been trying to understand sf in all its varieties and media to see whether there is something that we can call "science fictionality" that they all share, or whether the term means only whatever its user wants it to mean. I began with the somewhat pre-postmodern premise that even if there isn't some essence of sf, there are specific cognitive attractions that make sf interesting to readers and audiences.

I have recently landed on seven such cognitive attractions. They are not meant to be exclusive, or even necessarily present in all works of sf, but they did seem to work for literary sf, and most cinema as well. Here they are:

- Fictive neology – imaginary new or alien words that have either never been heard in contemporary social life, or have taken on unfamiliar new meanings.

- Fictive novums – imaginary versions of what the German-Jewish philosopher Ernst Bloch called novums, new phenomena that change the course of history.

- Future history – the projection of historical models into the future.

- Imaginary science – playful distortions of known science.

- The science-fictional sublime – the sense of sublime awe associated with technological mediation.

- The science-fictional grotesque – the sense of grotesque destabilization of conventional epistemologies created by new scientific inventions and discoveries.
- The Technologiade – stories that stipulate to the mythopoetic centrality of technoscience, even when they critique it.

These categories, what I've nicknamed the 7 Beauties of Science Fiction, come mainly from the study of sf literature and film. But can they be adapted to non-verbal media? Can these seven beauties really work for such a predominantly non-verbal medium as music?

I know music is a challenging medium to interpret. What I did not realize is the enormous number of musical texts that can be considered science-fictional, ranging through popular and dance musics, jazz, avant-garde art, film soundtracks, operas, and performance art -- by now, pretty much the entire range of musical idioms. In these niches sf music has not only adopted the conventions of literary and cinematic sf, but created its own conventions – some of which have fed back into other arts, as would be expected, given the importance of music for post-World War II technological culture.

So the one word in the title of my talk that is accurate is "short." There could be five hour, or even two semester versions of this story; and as so often happens when one dives deep into the genre, a whole new image of technological modernity emerges.

I'd like to begin with a quote from the French economist and cultural theorist, Jacques Attali, from his book *Noise* published in 1977, and used by the critic Jon Savage in his fine history of Techno-styles, "Machine Soul":

"Music is prophecy: its styles and economic organization are ahead of the rest of society because it explores much faster than material reality can, the entire range

of possibilities in a given code. It makes audible the new world that will gradually become visible."

This is essentially the position of the musical avant-garde throughout the 20th century. Although sf does not become a major inspiration in music before 1950, we can see some of the ideas where the avant-garde and modernists overlap with sf: empirical prophecy, accelerated exploration, possibility, "the new world." I'll return to this quote later, to look at how sf music differs in significant ways from modernist and avant-garde music, but for now I'd like to look at concrete historical developments.

From the beginning of the 20th century, modernist and avant-garde composers were fascinated by two dialectically related, indeed opposing problems. On the one hand, they strove to break down the elite conventions of bourgeois music, from the dominance of elite performance venues to the very concept of the inherently musical tone. They violated the sanctity of the musical art tradition in every way they could: through Dadaist performances, the incorporation of non-musical sounds and random noise, and the construction of weird musical instruments creating previously unheard tones – such as the electrophonic devices, like the theremin. Of course, all instruments are by definition machines, but many of the avant-garde instruments were connected to the new complex machinery of automated production and scientific experimentation. In the US, the enormous acoustic machines of Harry Partch, and the crazy programmed player pianos of Conlan Nancarrow, are well known examples. These "experiments" were generally inspired by a utopian project: to free the ear from the enslaving habits of tradition. At the other pole was the dystopian vision of the dehumanization of the musical imagination produced by these cyborg attacks.

The bourgeoisified conservative notions of music prevailed in most popular venues through the first half of the century. In film music, for example, there was no distinctive kind of score that accompanied sf films or radio plays – there was no reason to associate the score of a Flash Gordon serial with sf, rather than a jungle adventure of Tarzan or The Phantom. This is of course still true of many sf films. There is very little difference between the scores John Williams wrote for Spielberg's sf films compared to the adventure films. And most sf film spectacles have scores that only the most scrupulous students of sound design would be able to identify as science-fictional. So, I'd like to make clear for convenience's sake that in this little history I will concentrate on music that might be heard as science-fictional even when it does not accompany a sf spectacle that lends it its specific "content." This means that I will have to lean heavily on the first two of the 7Beauties: the neology and the novum. In musical terms, imaginary neology might be called imaginary neosonics – new sounds that the audience believes, in its moment of aesthetic suspension of disbelief, have not been heard before, and which indicate a future (or alternative) world in which new faculties of hearing and new ways of musical cognition have emerged. Although this doesn't exhaust the kinds of sf music worth studying, these neosonics are the connection points between sf and 20th century art music. This means that I won't be discussing some of the most famous sf scores, Kubrick's *2001*, for example, or the Vangelis electronic retro-noir of *Blade Runner* – not because they do not belong in a history of sf music, but because they rely almost entirely on supporting narrative and visual contexts to be recognized as science-fictional. In good old modernist critical terms, they are not "inherently" science-fictional.

SF enters musical life in the West in the early 1950s in two forms: film scores and rock and roll. Two films in particular had enormous influence: Bernard Herrmann's score for the original *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, and Akira Ikufube's for *Godzilla*. Ifukube, a high modernist composer who was essentially a gifted Bartók epigone, was given a blank check by the Honda studio to use whatever electronic devices the studio had available. Using magnetic tape to alter the quality of sounds, Ifukube developed a fascinating sound-design fusing crafted electronic noises never heard before with a moving orchestral score. Hermann's score is now one of the most famous in Hollywood. Using not one, but two theremins, three electric organs, vibraphone, and electrified string-instruments, and highly evocative Ivesian harmonies, Hermann produced a score that, as we shall see, became identifiable as sf music for more than one generation. Here is perhaps the most famous portion, if not necessarily the best:

[fig.]

The *Day the ESS* was not the first score to use the theremin. But with Herrmann a connection was made, within the range of conscious association, between the weird machine-music of the electronic instruments with other weird machines: Klaatus's spaceship, the robot Gort, and the strange spiky communication device Klaatu displays before he is shot by a nervous soldier. The sound seems to come from the atmosphere created by the alien technology, a sort of alien techno-soundscape.

This innovative approach was taken to its extreme limit by Bebe and Louis Barron's score for *Forbidden Planet*, the Disney-produced sf version of the *Tempest* in 1957. The Barrons were deeply committed and sincere electronic composers of the American school, and they produced the only major film score consisting exclusively of

electronic music – not conventional music simulated by an electronic machine, but constructed out of the modulations of the analogue synthesizers themselves. It is amazing, looking back, that a major studio would have remained committed to such an iconoclastic project. That was perhaps the moment when the electronic sound effects of sf films were viewed as most continuous with the accompanying score.

[fig.]

As more and more sf films were being produced, certain conventions became established – a certain low maximum of electronic and artificial sounds mixed into atonal sections within a prevailingly romantic orchestral mood. At the same time, electronic distortions of sound were becoming central to creating the illusions of sf. In the original version of *The Fly* in 1958, the climactic moment comes when the grotesque visual of the scientist whose head has been shopped onto a fly's body is fused with the electronic sound effect from which the title of my talk is taken.

[fig.]

Many people remember nothing of the film but this moment – and for good reason. Here the fantastic grotesque is fused with science fiction and calls out directly to the audience: Help Me! The pseudo-realistic depiction of the human/fly splice's appearance and voice is accompanied irresistibly by the audience's awe at the special f/x – and a powerful solicitation.

The other venue for introducing sf was in pop music, specifically rock and roll, in novelty numbers such as Billy Lee Riley's "Flying Saucer Rock and Roll" from 1957 and Sheb Wooley's "One Eyed, One Horned, Flying Purple People Eater" in 1958. The fact that these novelty tunes could become hits meant that the sf culture established by

television serials, drive-in movies, and comics had penetrated deeply into popular culture. Such songs linked sf with teen culture, bypassing all high cultural references. The rock and roll/sf connection was a classical alliance between pop forms marginalized by mainstream culture. In the late 1960s, both of these forms leaped from the margins to the center via the psychedelic counterculture. The counterculture had a particular affinity for certain kinds of sf, inasmuch as seeing through the doors of perception and past the limits of bourgeois consciousness implied new and alien modes of perceiving reality – alien views experienced regularly by the psychonauts on LSD and other hallucinogens. These altered states lent themselves to sf mythologizing, and indeed they sometimes produced sf-inflected hallucinatory states involving UFOs, extraterrestrial visitors and abductions, paranoid awareness of prosthetic implants, utopian visions of universal harmony, 1984s, etc.

Psychedelic music was also closely connected with the technological production of live music – creating a paradox that did not escape many contemporaries, that the anti-technological ideology of the rock counterculture was belied by its reliance on electrical instruments, amplifiers, and the perhaps most important of all for our context, the intentional distortion of musical sound through feedback, reverb-delay, fuzztones, harmonic overlays, etc., all produced by electronic means. The overtly electronic sounds of guitar feedback became associated with the futuristic. Feedback is noise for the classically trained ear, so the ability to find pleasure in the noise implies a broader sensibility, more attuned to machines, and the psychedelic ability to hear "more" and "new" sounds.

The sf content of psychedelic culture came quickly into the foreground. Many bands alluded to sf texts. Psychedelic culture conflated just about any cultural-mythic motif that could be counterposed to gray, empirical materialism. It combined religious mysticism, libertarian and romantic Marxist theory, luddite technicism, electric-guitar posthumanism, African-American exoticism – all of which gained an sf edge because they were seen as cultures of the future. The counterculture was on the edge of utopian social transformations that the "straights" were incapable of perceiving.

The most committed musical synthesis of these trends in my view was by Jimi Hendrix, who gradually developed his own sf-text, combining apocalyptic elements from all over the place, with a sound that he consciously cultivated as the music of both the future and an alternative reality. The earliest Jimi Hendrix Experience album contains a science-fictional near-instrumental, "Third Stone from the Sun," which involves a simple, but clear apocalyptic musical drama. Hendrix clearly considered his electric guitar as something of a mind-transformer and storyteller. This was later elaborated in his studio, Electric Ladyland, and his encouragement of gear-makers to experiment with new sound boxes. Their concrete material inventions were to represent changes in consciousness. Hendrix initiates his second album, *Axis Bold as Love*, with a display of sonic bravura explicitly playing with motifs of the UFO and extraterrestrial visitation. You'll note the distorted voice, which will become as important an aspect of sf music as feedback distortion and the synthesizer. This introduction leads seamlessly into "Up From the Skies," in which Hendrix takes on the persona either of a hippie Klaatu or a spaceman Shiva high on ganja, jokingly contemplating the destruction of the old earth in apocalyptic fire – "or maybe just a change of climate."

[fig.]

On his most mature album, *Electric Ladyland*, which was released on two vinyl platters, Hendrix's interest in eclectic science fictional mysticism and electronic noise music reached its apogee – one side was composed almost entirely of a piece entitled "1983… Moon Moon Turn the Tides," on which soundscape, myth, dolphin mystique, and the evolution from the sea story are combined in a romantic sf psycho-opera about a utopian return to the sea, escaping from the fallen world of "The King." Under other circumstances, I would have loved to have spent more time with it. I consider it Hendrix's richest work.

Hendrix influenced many musicians, both in storytelling and sound production. In the UK in the late 1960s and early 70s, the New Wave of literary sf was in full glory, and groups such as Pink Floyd were developing the thematic links between mind-altering drugs, sf motifs, and electronic production of sound. By the mid-1970s, sf had become a completely familiar, even cliché code for apocalyptic musical energy, and rock groups were incorporating both narrative and sonic elements of every stripe of apocalypticism. The hippie utopianism of acid rock generated its dystopian shadow, and not by accident. In the UK in the 1970s, the British musical New Wave brought a new sensibility, the counter-counter-culture. Its main tool was the digital synthesizer. This relatively new electronic instrument was the object of scorn perhaps especially by electric guitarists. It produced sounds that were neither "organic," nor appropriate imitations and inducers of organic mental states, it was rather a "cyborg" sound. Contrary to the electric guitar's noisily rich density, the synth in its earliest incarnations was an ascetically thin, pure sound, obviously and intentionally artificial. Feedback had never been entirely

disconnected from the sense of being an exciting accident, since every garage band and every audience experienced accidental feedback routinely. The synth was the exact opposite, and many New Wave bands cultivated a robotic appearance, ultimately extolling, and exaggerating, the pose of electronic posthumanism. Some were comic and ironic, although never purely camp: such as Devo and Gary Numan. But with the German group Kraftwerk came the stylized artificial equivalent of Hendrix's romanticism – a band thoroughly devoted to a machine aesthetic, in sound, in instrumentation, and in stage appearance. Kraftwerk drew equally on the European conventions of avant-garde machine music and the pop cultural representation of robotic dehumanization. In Kraftwerk, popular posthumanism attained audibility.

UK New Wave music was harshly critical and dystopic, but with a new element: ambivalence, asserting the difficulty – if not the impossibility – of resisting the seductions of techno-capitalism. Dancing itself had become highly technologized and multi-mediated compared to the collective looseness of psychedelic dances; with disco the synthesized, relentless, high beats-per-minute rate established the bases for techno-ecstasy. New Wave and early techno dancing became the moments of escape velocity from the otherwise inescapable dystopian sf world in which we currently live. Many of the most dedicated groups sounded as if they were writing soundtracks for a dystopian futuristic opera, exemplified for me in The Sound's "New Dark Age." Cyberpunk music – alias Hardcore House, Industrial, and Drum-and-Bass – were about to be born.

My narrative has been driven by the theme of the fusion of electronic sound and sf feeling – how such things as guitar distortion and the synthesizer not only created new experiences, but at the same moment presented them in fictions of experiencing the future

or alternate worlds. Many of you will no doubt have noted a few gigantic absences in my chronology. They are so big, that one might justifiably reconfigure the whole story, placing them at the center. These are the musicians who took up science-fictional motifs and scenarios to create mythopoeic performances that have had almost unimaginably great influence on popular culture in the West: Sun Ra, David Bowie, and George Clinton. I am not going to dwell on these men. I will assume most everyone in the audience is familiar with one or more of them. But I can't proceed without a few observations. Sun Ra is gradually acquiring the reputation as one of the most influential figures in jazz by people who may not have heard one note of his music. For our purposes, Sun Ra employed motifs from hermetic lore, rotated through African-American street metaphysics, to present himself as an alien emissary brought to earth to save humanity through what he termed "space music." Sun Ra was absolutely sincere in his statements of belief – in any case, at a minimum, he was the first jazz musician to experiment with electrical keyboards, starting in 1953. Although he kept contemporary racial politics at arms' length, Sun Ra regularly acted out the metaphor of African-Americans as an alien species held captive on Earth, needing a utopian new music to be liberated. This symbolic scenario is perhaps the single most powerful motif of Afrofuturism.

When Bowie appeared as Ziggy Stardust, an extraterrestrial rock star, with his band of aliens, The Spiders from Mars, he constructed an enduring myth of the glamorous outsider, the sacrificial queer, who owes no allegiance to the common run of humanity, yet who feasts on their attention. Bowie was eventually hired on the basis of Ziggy to play The Man Who Fell to Earth, and his association of alien with rock star

continued for many years. Where Sun Ra became the articulator of the myth of African-Americans as aliens, Bowie incarnated the myth of the queer as the misunderstood creative extraterrestrial exiled from his home planet. Bowie has been interested in sf narratives throughout his career, but he has not been particularly innovative in his use of neosonics. George Clinton and P-Funk connected music with sf thematics in a much more exhaustive and inventive way. In one of the most fascinating cultural mutations of the past fifty years, George Clinton oversaw the transformations of funk music – one the simplest and most carnal forms of African-American dance music – into a playful surrealistic mythology that he played out in extravagant stage performances that included, during P-Funk's heyday, Clinton's ascent from the stage in a big pulpy Mothership. Clinton was a serious fan of every sort of sf, but many of the most striking sf motifs in his performances were taken from the Afro-futurist version – the Mothership for example was an African-American in-joke referring to the Nation of Islam's belief in an apocalyptic Mothership circling the earth that will save the righteous at the time of the apocalypse. Today we see many motifs drawn from Sun Ra, Bowie and P-Funk in innumerable rock performances; the Mothership on stage, for example, was a mainstay of many rock groups to follow, most recently U-2.

[fig.]

I'd like return to Attali's quote, because from it I think we can tease out one of the basic conditions of sf music. Sun Ra would have been in complete agreement with Attali. Importantly, he did not consider his music and mythology to be "fictions." They may have been myths, but they were true ones, they were "myth-science" in his terms, and the music both represented and created the "new world." I hesitate to include Sun Ra as a

creator of sf music, because he was absolutely sincere – "naïve" in classical aesthetic terms --, whereas one of the conditions of sf in any medium is, I think, that it uses "naïve" beliefs about science, material reality, society, etc. and subjects them to the ludic rules of art. Thus we would expect science fiction music to maintain a certain playful distance from statements of belief. This is an easy prescription, since sf, like popular art in general, understands the rapidity of change in knowledge and belief very well.

Returning to the thread of club music – evolving now into the myriad house and industrial styles – we see a complete reversal of the 60s' and early 70s' relationship to spontaneity and immediacy, now acknowledging, and now sometimes celebrating, technological mediation of sound and cyborg altered states. The essence of techno music is a beat so driving that it creates the impression of an automatic process. If the drummers of the Grateful Dead, Santana, or Jefferson Airplane created the impression that they were invoking deities, the electronic rhythms of techno forms create the impression of bypassing the middle-men – not only the drummer, but the gods themselves – as if plugging into a world-sustaining mechanical operation, channeling the vibrations of a virtual reality constructed by intelligent machines. The computer-aided musical styles have produced an enormous variety of subgenres and atmospheres. A classical techno-rave drives the body to a machine-designated level of performance defined by bpm – beats per minute. Alternatively, ambient techno chills the body in a wash of machine downtime, the mainframe in dreaming mode.

Techno styles are the most obviously science-fiction oriented musical styles. The number of artists with sf pseudonyms is too great to list – from Luke Skywalker and Jedi Knights to Wintermute, as are the tunes named after sf texts. From its origins, the seminal

style of Detroit techno strove to synthesize the two most distinct sf lines of popular music: Afrofuturistic funk and Kraftwerk's Krautrock.

SF proliferated in music in every imaginable mode, and in synch with the prevailing styles of sf in other media. As all other media, musical sf responds to the cultural forces and attractions that select certain styles to be dominant over others at a certain time. For example, although I am emphasizing the neosonics and their evocation of new perceptual worlds, there are quite different kinds of sf musics, with relatively few neosonics. Take the alternative history or parallel reality subgenre, depicting worlds similar to our own in many ways, but significantly different in others. One could argue that this subgenre's popularity is a manifestation of the constant flow and deconstruction of real-world cultures as they collide, diffuse, and reconsolidate in diaspora and global media. Two delightful examples of alternate world music are Ekova, a now defunct trio based in Paris, who affected to sing the songs of an imaginary culture, complete with an imaginary language invented by their singer, Dierdre Dubois. A still functioning example is Radio Tarifa, a Spanish ensemble who play music that they imagine would have been an actually existing style had the Moors stayed in Spain and assimilated indigenous Spanish and gypsy styles to their own.

Electronic sounds lend themselves to science-fictionalization, simply because they deviate greatly and in many ways from established conventions, and until they are fully normalized, they call attention to the artificiality of their sources. This might be because we want to resolve our cognitive dissonance by assigning a recognizable source to an unfamiliar perception, or because we already are familiar with a source that we inevitably associate with technological innovation. But even more important than these

factors is that the technologies with which they are associated have acquired cultural fetish status. Computer-centered youth subcultures are drawn to greater and greater consolidations of existing media into a web of digitization, and through games, films, and the cornucopia of replication technologies conceive of computers as the instruments of world creation. Compared with the inertia of a social world still attached to mythologies of nature and organic process, postmodern youth feel they are already living in the future, and their music thus expresses the affects of the future, which are themselves often stimulated and created by their machines. But I don't want to be simplistic here. As the rest of hypermodern culture catches up to the futuristic youth, youth have to find new ways of rebelling. Today in the US, most of an adult's culture is mediated by digital technologies – from porn to home shopping and online gaming. Indeed, the two cultures – techno-bohemian youth and the digital bourgeoisie – share a great deal more space than they did in the recent past. For the most part this has benefited sf, which now can use strange sounds on a much greater palette. For unlike the avant-garde experiments with machine music, sf requires a certain pretence that at least some futuristic conditions are already familiar. Thus digital techniques – ranging from recording previously unheard sounds to synthesizing them – can be used to create sf sounds: machine utterances, alternative organic utterances, or alternative social-cultural utterances.

Some writers on new music suggest that we should begin from the material base, and write first about the machines that changed the cultural soundscape – such as the Roland synthesizer, the beat box, the vocoder, the sampler, looping devices, etc. Here too we would be discussing the dialectical relationship between new sonic sensations (the new world that is being prophesied in Attali's quote), and the cultural infrastructure

which is already in place. Much of the most interesting science-fictional music plays on this rich relationship between futuristic fantasy and the acknowledged social forces in the present that are too hard for mainstream thought to see. This is one of the senses in which we can speak of the cyborgization of recent music. In the most simplistic sense, all instrumental music might be called cyborg, since musical instruments are non-living prostheses with which the living musician establishes a creative relationship. But if we push toward a notion of the cyborg that owes more to Donna Haraway, we can see that much of our culturally emphasized music of the past twenty years owes its existence to the way musicians manipulate the web of digital technologies. It is to be expected that artists will be aware, to different degrees of course, that conditions for their music have changed, and these changes will become part of the music itself – where the gap between music as created text and as performance often disappears entirely. It's in the nature of the digital arts and spectacles to become self-reflective – not because they are inspired by higher cognitive aspirations, but because they continually cope with earlier versions of themselves, possible transformative innovations, and the exhaustion that comes from hyper-accelerated application. This almost irresistibly attracts them to sf, which routinely toys with reflection on the effects of technology on social life.

One of the most interesting examples of this trend is the digitization of the human voice in sf music. We saw how important magnetic tape technologies were in creating the most distinctive sonic effects of *Godzilla* and *The Fly*. In those relatively naïve works, there is no indication that the uncanny experience is caused by new technologies, only that they are caused by alien organs. With digital voice-altering technologies like the vocoder and autotune, which changes the voice in ways that are identifiably electronic,

the playful gap between the representation of a "future real" and the manifestation of a "new here-and-now" comes into the foreground.

In artistically ambitious contexts this technology can create profound effects. Todd Machover, a highly respected composer wrote an opera on Philip K. Dick's **Valis**. Machover broke the piece into two – the first half dominated by traditional orchestration, while in the second digital technologies come into the foreground. At the turning point, we hear the voice of the salvific aliens controlling the VALIS spaceship, beaming information to the protagonist's brain.

[fig.]

Machover brilliantly, and simply, uses the acceleration afforded by digital technologies to represent the acceleration of information streaming into a human brain.

In 1981, Laurie Anderson released "O Superman." The tune featured her vocoder distorted voice over an ambiguously mechanical minimalist pattern of two chords and a subtle evocation of one of Jules Massenet's operas.

[fig.]

It is quite a wonderful feat of placing irony upon irony regarding the relationship between authentic experience and digital simulation. I wouldn't call it sf – though it certainly uses many science fictional motifs and ironies, ironies that have become ever more acute as recorded and digital voices saturate our communication soundscape. Anderson's first album, *Big Science*, plays with many of these ironies – and includes many other uses of midi technology to confuse the boundaries among utterances. But one context does not collapse: and that is play.

Let us jump to a more overtly science-fictional example. Here is the famous aria from *The Fifth Element*, sung by the alien diva.

[fig.]

The transition from a digitally recorded but human voice to one that is digitally enhanced is nearly seamless, as is the shift in genre from Donizetti to Eric Serra's techno-disco.

Now an example from our science fictional present. Many of you will recognize this song from one of our all-too-human divas, using the technology that has become widespread in hiphop, contemporary r&b, and pop: the autotune.

[fig.]

It's hard for me to say at this point why this effect has become so widespread. The original purpose of the autotune is said to have been to correct the pitch of singers like Britney Spears, whose vocal command was uncertain. One of the features previously considered to be a flaw of the autotune is that it does not (yet) have the capacity to make seamless transitions at high speed – in other words, it has to leap to cover lags. This can be exploited to give any singer a glitchy cyborg voice – which may well be connected to the funny sounds and voice distortions characteristic of P-Funk and Bootsy's Rubber band, and their heirs, techno-funk projects like Deltron 3030 and Daft Punk. In any case, the adoption of the cyborg aesthetic has inspired a full-fledged science fictional spectacle comparable to a Ziggy Stardust tour, in the alliance between Kanye West and Daft Punk.

[fig.]

I'd like to close with a particularly apropos example of the fusions that have led us to where we are. It is called, appropriately enough, "Help Me!," by the German trance

dj Timo Maas, and was a club hit, remixed by Deep Dish, in 2002. By this point, we can assume the audience, even in the midst of ecstatic dancing, recognizes the homages and ironies, as classic sf had been re-housed in House.