

Spaceman says goodbye to ISS with David Bowie classic (Update)

May 13 2013, by Stuart Williams



This image provided by NASA shows astronaut Chris Hadfield recording the first music video from space Sunday May 12, 2013. The song was his cover version of David Bowie's Space Oddity. Hadfield and astronaut Thomas Marshburn are scheduled to return to earth Monday May 13, 2013. Credit: NASA, Chris Hadfield

Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield has marked his upcoming departure from the International Space Station by singing a cover version of David Bowie's classic song "Space Oddity" recorded on the orbiting laboratory.

Hadfield, 53, who became a global star during his half-year stint on the ISS with regular Twitter updates that gave insights into daily life in

space, is due to touch down back on Earth early Tuesday.

The video of the moustachioed Canadian spaceman crooning his way through the Bowie track has already become a huge hit on YouTube, with over half a million views less than a day after it was first posted.

The video shows Hadfield singing with an impressively melodious voice as he floats through the station in the zero gravity with a guitar which he also plays with some aplomb.

"Ground control to Major Tom/ Lock your Soyuz hatch/ And put your helmet on," he sings, looking wistfully out into deep space through one of the portholes of the ISS.

His lyrics lightly adapted Bowie's 1969 original, somewhat more suggestive, original words which went: "Take your protein pills/ And put your helmet on."

"With deference to the genius of David Bowie, here's Space Oddity, recorded on Station. A last glimpse of the World," Hadfield wrote on Twitter to introduce the song.

Hadfield's voice and guitar solos were recorded on the station although the backing track was compiled by a team on Earth.

The video provided a fitting climax to Hadfield's six-month mission to the ISS which has shown him use social media more effectively than anyone in the history of space travel.

His imaginative use of Twitter to show how the Earth looks from space has captured the public interest and arguably made him the most recognisable astronaut since Neil Armstrong.

Hadfield won over 800,000 followers on Twitter with spectacular photos and videos from the station and also insights into sometimes the most mundane aspects of daily life in orbit.

His son Evan Hadfield—who helped put together the video on Earth—said on Twitter that the film was the first ever music video made in space and took six months to make.

"Did the human race really do this? Wonderful!" commented the hugely popular British science television presenter Professor Brian Cox.

"It only took 6 months to make! :)" Evan Hadfield tweeted back.

Chris Hadfield is due to land back on Earth in Kazakhstan on Tuesday morning at 0231 GMT aboard a Russian Soyuz-TMA capsule along with Russia's Roman Romanenko and NASA astronaut Tom Marshburn.

"We're supposed to be sleeping late to be rested for tonight's Soyuz flight home, but I'm finding it hard to sleep in," Hadfield wrote on one of his regular Twitter updates.

Hadfield, who was commander of the station, oversaw a dramatic spacewalk at the weekend performed by Americans Marshburn and Chris Cassidy to halt an ammonia leak.

Hadfield's official biography published by the Canadian Space Agency lists a seemingly endless range of earth-bound interests including "skiing, playing guitar, singing, riding, writing, running, and playing volleyball and squash."

Raised on a corn farm in southern Ontario, Hadfield became a top fighter pilot for the Canadian air force before being selected from over 5,000 people in 1992 to be one of four new Canadian astronauts.

This is already his third space mission, after flying with the US shuttle to the now defunct Russian Mir station in 1995 and to the ISS in April 2001.

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Citation: Spaceman says goodbye to ISS with David Bowie classic (Update) (2013, May 13) retrieved 13 March 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-05-spaceman-goodbye-iss-david-bowie.html>

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