

Space bids farewell to Bowie, one of its own

January 12 2016, by Elodie Cuzin



The "Starman" costume from David Bowie's appearance on "Top of the Pops" in 1972

David Bowie's death has plunged fans around the world into grief, but his music lives on—not only on Earth but in space.

For astronauts and ordinary people who gaze into the mystery of the sky, Bowie was one of their own, fascinated by the possibilities of the universe.

From "Space Oddity" to "Starman" and "Life on Mars," Bowie's lyrics echoed into [space](#) over the decades.

"And the stars look very different today," NASA tweeted after Bowie's shock death on Sunday at age 69 following a secret struggle with cancer.

The quotation was from Bowie's breakthrough hit "Space Oddity" which was released in 1969—the year of the first moon landing.

Bowie took on the alter ego of Ziggy Stardust, the androgynous rock-and-roll messenger for extraterrestrials.

"RIP David Bowie," said NASA, tweeting a link to the 2013 "Space Oddity" version by Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield, sung weightless aboard the International Space Station (ISS).

Hadfield's version was an Internet sensation, clocking up more than 28 million YouTube hits—and counting.

Bowie once posted on Facebook to say that the cover was "possibly the most poignant version of the song ever created."



This December 25, 2012 NASA photo shows Canadian Space Agency astronaut Chris Hadfield playing his guitar in the International Space Station's Cupola

"When I sang it and listened to my voice it kind of surprised me," Hadfield told the BBC on Monday.

"It was somehow as if he (Bowie) had recognized what it was going to be like (in space) and his words somehow sort of transcended it a little bit. I could almost feel what he'd been thinking just when I sang it in that place."

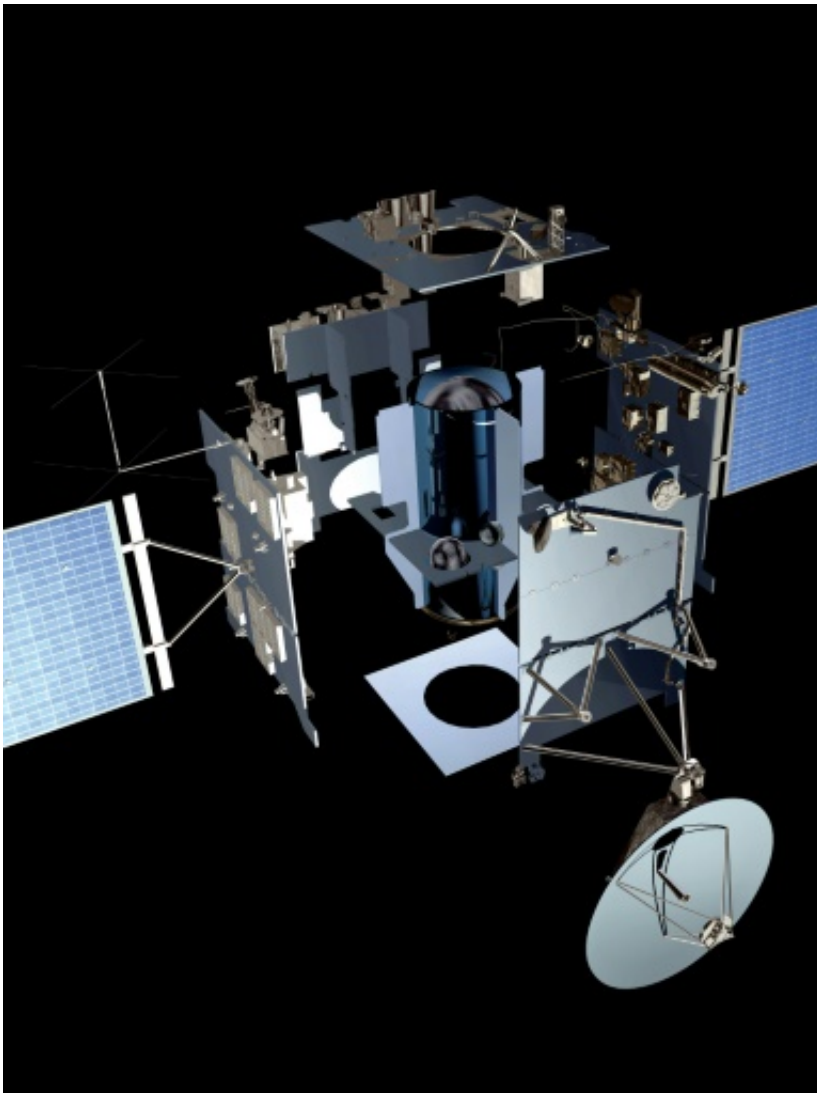
After news of Bowie's death became public, Hadfield riffed in a tweet on the words of another of Bowie's hits: "Ashes to ashes, dust to stardust."

"Your brilliance inspired us all. Goodbye Starman," he added,

poignantly.

'Fellow space traveler'

It did not take long for Bowie's death to reach the International Space Station.



European space probe Rosetta tweeted "RIP David Bowie" next to a drawing of a sad face wearing the famous red flash that marked Bowie's face on the cover of the album "Aladdin Sane"

"Saddened to hear David Bowie has lost his battle with cancer—his music was an inspiration to many," tweeted British astronaut Tim Peake, traveling aboard the ISS.

Scott Kelly, another aboard the ISS, also tweeted: "Sad to learn of the death of musician David Bowie whose inspiration lives on 'far above the world.'"

Even the European space probe Rosetta praised the memory of a "fellow space traveller."

"RIP David Bowie" it tweeted, next to a drawing of a sad face wearing the famous red flash that marked Bowie's face on the cover of the album "Aladdin Sane."

A wide-ranging actor in addition to his music career, Bowie played a fallen alien in the 1976 film "The Man Who Fell To Earth," based on the novel by Walter Tevis.

The alien, Thomas Jerome Newton, has come to Earth in desperation for water for his parched planet but is pulled in by Earth's pleasures.

'Terrified' of real space travel

Up to the end Bowie retained his preoccupation with space. He recently wrote music for "Lazarus," a stage version of "The Man Who Fell to Earth," and his last album, released Friday on his 69th birthday, was called "Blackstar."

Yet Bowie never hid that he was "terrified" at the idea of actual space travel.

Asked in a 2002 interview what his preoccupation was with spaceships and space, he said: "It's my little inner space, isn't it, writ large. I wouldn't dream of getting on a spaceship, it'd scare the shit out of me.

"I've absolutely no interest or ambition to go into space whatsoever. I'm scared going down the end of the garden."

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