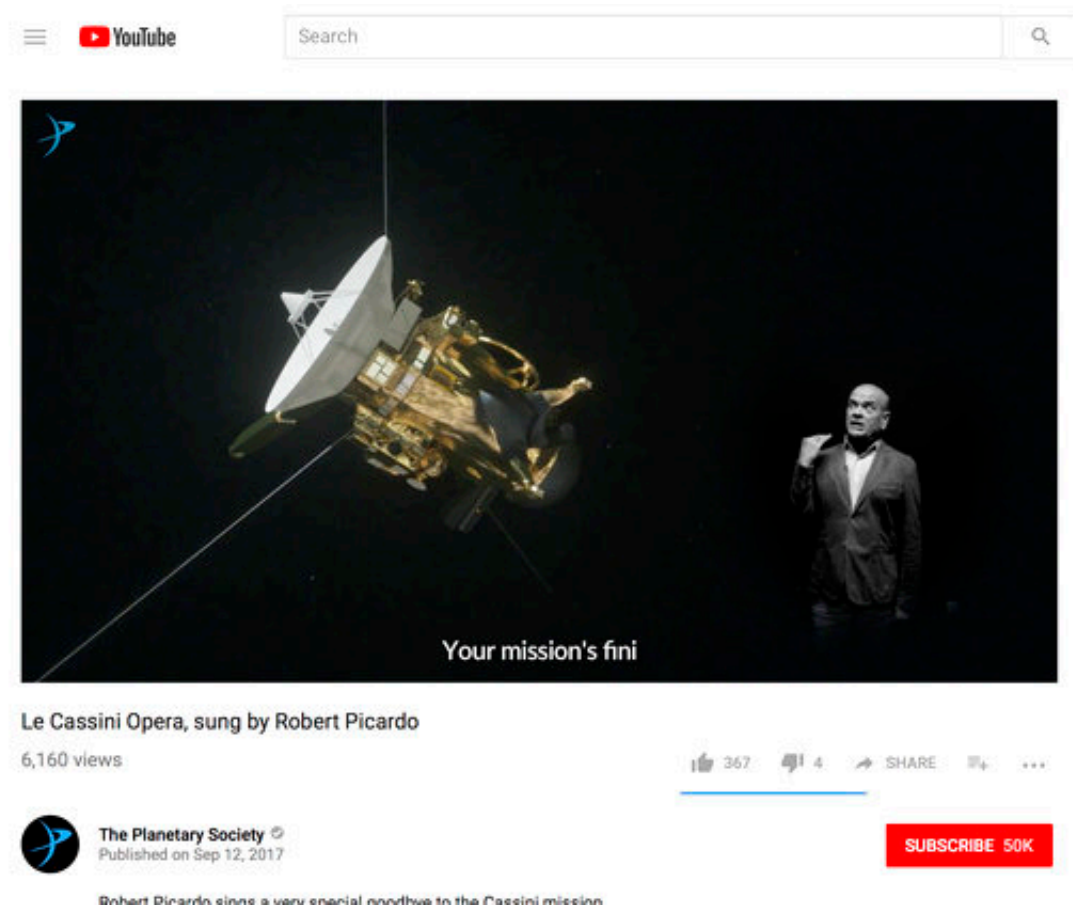


Goodbye Cassini: Saturn spacecraft gets funny opera send-off

September 13 2017, by Marcia Dunn



This image shows a frame from a video posted on YouTube by The Planetary Society on Sept. 12, 2017, with actor Robert Picardo singing an operatic ode to the Cassini spacecraft. The actor from TV's old "Star Trek: Voyager" series says he dashed off the lyrics in about a minute, several weeks ago. (The Planetary Society via AP)

NASA's Cassini spacecraft is getting a grand but hilarious opera send-off before it plunges through Saturn's atmosphere and vaporizes Friday.

An actor from TV's old "Star Trek: Voyager" series, Robert Picardo, says he dashed off the lyrics in about a minute, several weeks ago. He collaborated with the creative director of the Planetary Society, and, presto, "Le Cassini Opera" was born.

Picardo set the words to the instantly recognizable aria "La Donna e mobile" from Verdi's "Rigoletto."

While Cassini's 20-year mission has been "a serious success," according to Picardo, the [opera](#) is definitely a comedy. Here's how it opens: "Goodbye, Cassini. Your mission's fini. Bravo, Cassini! Have some linguini." And on it goes, paying humorous tribute.

For the record, Cassini's program manager, Earl Maize, loves the performance.

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