

## **'The Rocket Man' greets the 'Rocket Men'**

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Continuing the celebration of André Kuipers' music in space, British rock legend Sir Elton John sent a special message to ESA, André and the crew of the ISS on the 40th anniversary of his classic song 'Rocket Man'.

The accompanying video was recorded during Sir Elton's Million Dollar Piano Show in Las Vegas, on 17 April, 40 years to the day after his single Rocket Man (I Think It's Going To Be A Long Long Time) was released around the world.



*ESA astronaut André Kuipers on the International Space Station during his PromISSE mission. Launched in December 2011, André will spend over six months on the Station.*

Sir Elton said, "When I was a boy Dan Dare was a comic book hero, and space travel just a romantic idea, not a reality. I was 14 years old when Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space; my songwriting partner Bernie Taupin was just 11. Bernie and I did not meet until 1967, and two years after we met, Neil Armstrong became the first man to step on to the moon.

"Our generation was smitten with the glory and excitement of space travel. 'Rocket Man' - and indeed 'Dan Dare' on the Rock of the Westies album - came from those boyhood dreams of travelling beyond the stars and looking back on Earth.

"Not long after the Rocket Man single was released, my band and I were invited to the NASA headquarters in Texas and shown around by Al Worden, Apollo 15

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command module pilot. It was thrilling to find that real astronauts liked our song, Rocket Man, which was about an imaginary astronaut.

"Now, 40 years later, it's amazing to hear from the astronauts at the European Space Agency that they like the song and that it has been on the playlist on the International Space Station. I send my best wishes to ESA and all the crew, and my thanks for keeping those boyhood dreams alive."

During long stays on the ISS, many astronauts take music with them for listening in off-duty hours. For his six-month mission, ESA's André Kuipers included Rocket Man in his playlist.

"This song has been an inspiration to many people who are interested in space, and especially those who wanted to become astronauts, including myself. It is certainly one of the most played songs here on the ISS, and we know it will accompany more astronauts into space in the future," said André.

Composed by Elton John and Bernie Taupin, Rocket Man has had a special connection with generations of astronauts and many others in the space industry ever since, as well as inspiring and entertaining millions of people around the world.



*ESA astronaut Jean-François Clervoy during training for one of his Space Shuttle flights*

ESA astronaut Jean-François Clervoy, with three Space Shuttle missions under his belt, said, "I took CDs from Elton John into space three times, and for sure Rocket Man was one of the songs I've listened to each time with great feeling."

The first European commander of the ISS, Frank De Winne, said: "There is nothing more beautiful than to see our planet from space. There are no boundaries, no skin colours, no political sides, just one planet with one common future. As Rocket Men

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and Women, it is our duty to testify about it and to strive for a better world for all. I AM a rocket man! Thank you, Elton John, for your great music.”

Rocket Man appeared on Elton John’s album Honky Château, released also 40 years ago next week, on 19 May 1972.

You can download the full list of André’s music at: [Playlist\[web\].pdf](#) [1]

To see André’s tune of the day, check out his daily logbook at: [blogs.esa.int/andre-kuipers](http://blogs.esa.int/andre-kuipers) [2]

If you want to write or dedicate a song to André, or suggest more songs for his playlist, drop us a line at: [contactesa@esa.int](mailto:contactesa@esa.int) [3]

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### **Links:**

[1] <http://download.esa.int/docs/Playlist%5Bweb%5D.pdf>

[2] <http://blogs.esa.int/andre-kuipers/?lang=en>

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