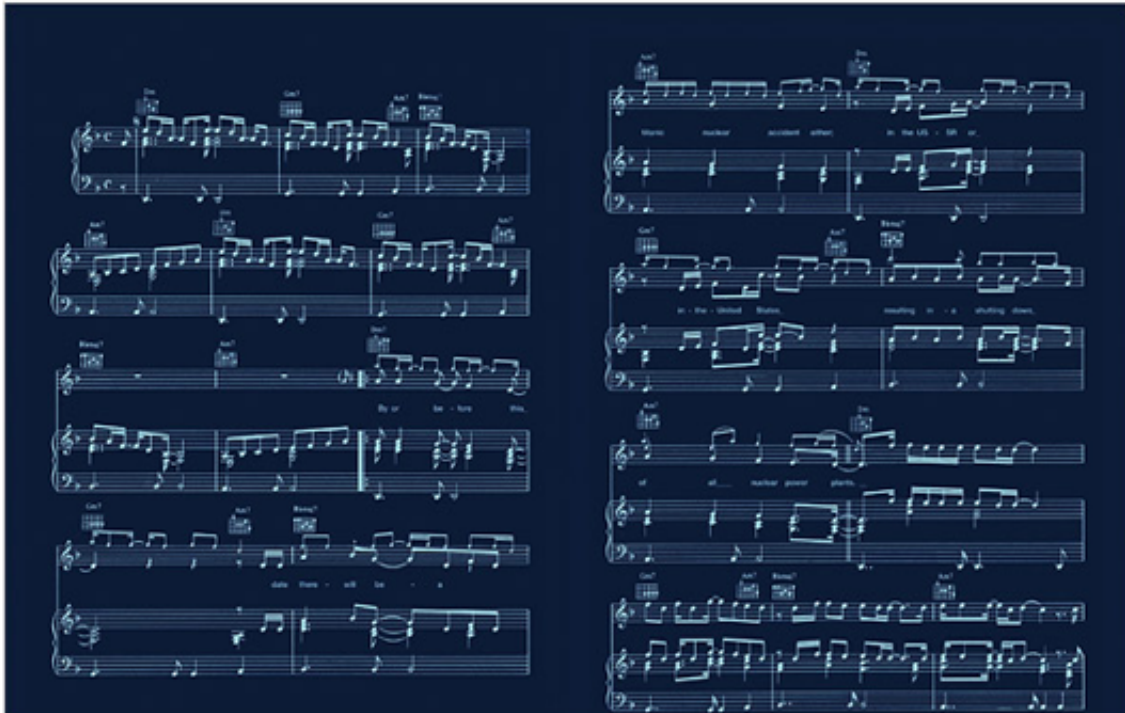


Kennedy, Randy, *No. 1 With a Bullet (or, Rather an Apocalyptic Blast)*,
 The New York Times, August 16, 2007

No. 1 With a Bullet (or, Rather, an Apocalyptic Blast)



Daniel Reich Gallery

Music (guess the hit) from Sean Daok's "Future Songs."

By **RANDY KENNEDY**
 Published: August 16, 2007

The pop singer Dionne Warwick and the paranoid, drug-fueled science-fiction writer Philip K. Dick are not often mentioned in the same sentence or even the same chapter.

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Adam Sank, the administrator of the culture department of The New York Times, gamely attempts to sing two of Philip K. Dick's pronouncements

But in a strange booklet of sheet music that was mailed out last week to more than 1,000 people by the Daniel Reich Gallery in Chelsea, Ms. Warwick and Mr. Dick share more than page space. They take the stage together in a kind of forced virtual duet, somewhere in the ether between a real and an imagined past. Above musical notes that once provided the heart-touching melody for Ms. Warwick's 1986 hit "That's What Friends Are For" (words by Carole Bayer Sager, music by Burt Bacharach), the sheet music substitutes words that Mr. Dick wrote in 1981, a year before his death, from a series of dire and sometimes eerily accurate predictions about the future.

🔊 Song 1 (mp3)
 ▶ 0:34 🔊

🔊 Song 2 (mp3)
 ▶ 0:41 🔊

Ms. Warwick sang: "And as far as I'm concerned/I'm glad I got the chance to say/That I do believe I love you." Mr. Dick's version might not have quite the same radio potential: Satellites will — key the music — "uncover vast unsuspected high energy phenomena in the universe indicating that there is sufficient mass to collapse the universe." (He prophesied that this would happen in 1986.)

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The artist who put together the cheap-looking booklet, Sean Dack, said he was not a card-carrying member of the Philip K. Dick cult, which continues to grow apace 25 years after his death. But when Mr. Dack came across the list of Mr. Dick's Nostradamus-like sayings a few years ago, he could not get them out of his head and wanted to find a way to work them into his art, which, he said, is "about crossing multiple paths at the same time."

So he decided to make a kind of pop-apocalyptic mash-up, pairing the predictions with the music for the Billboard No. 1 hit songs from each of the years that figure in Mr. Dick's prognostications, from 1983 to 2000.

The result, called "Future Songs," is described by the Daniel Reich Gallery as a "non event" or a mail exhibition, though there is also a bare-bones Web site, futuresongsexhibition.com. The book began landing in mailboxes (the old-fashioned kind) over the last few days and, at a time when late summer all but shuts down Chelsea galleries, it seemed to be almost an insider joke about the season's low boil.

The 20-page booklet is free. There was no party to celebrate its mailing. And besides some copies of it, there is nothing at all to see at the gallery, on West 23rd Street (though Mr. Reich said someone came by Monday night wondering if he could hear the songs. He could not.).

Mr. Dack, 30, said his intention was to construct a kind of false past from spare parts and also to infuse mindless pop-culture products from a more carefree time — "Most of the songs are kind of soft-rock or pop hits, a bit schlocky," he said — with some existential dread. It might not accomplish the task in quite the same way that David Lynch did with Roy Orbison's "In Dreams" in the movie "Blue Velvet," or that David Chase did with Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'" in the recent cut-to-black finale of "The Sopranos."

But there is something at least a little creepy about being informed to the melody of the Police's "Every Breath You Take" that the Soviets have developed a particle-beam accelerator to render missile attacks futile. (Mr. Dick, as if to cover himself in the event of the Soviet Union's demise, included a stray prediction for 2010 that foretold the invention of a device that could alter the past, meaning that the end of the cold war could still be erased in a few years by pro-Soviet guerrillas.)

Mr. Dack omits the names of the songs used for the project, meaning that readers must either play them on an instrument or be familiar enough with the notes to guess the original hits, many of them now in eternal rotation on the easy-listening part of the dial.

"It sort of lets the cat out the bag in a way if I name all the songs," he said.

But he also liked the way that a project centered around music included nothing audible and relied instead on sheet music, a kind of Victorian vestige in an age of iPods and MP3s. (There is also, of course, the nice Dick-Dack element to the whole thing, like something out of Mr. Dick's fiction.)

Mr. Dack said he had not sought permission from record or music-publishing companies before appropriating — or sampling — their sheet music. "I'm not making any money off this book," he said. "We're giving it out." He added, "I guess maybe it's something I should worry about a little."

He also said he was considering some kind of free event in which Mr. Dick's Mostly Terrifying Top 40 Hits might actually be belted out somewhere, although Mr. Dack would probably not do the belting himself.

"I really don't think I could play these songs well enough for anyone to want to listen," he said.