Storyboard for:

Radio Show: New Muse. Robots Reflect: What Do Our Machines Think of Us?

By Jason Ohler, 12/1999

Directions	Content	Time	Time
Music	Elsewhere; CD Last Glimpse, #4	1:13	73
Speaking	Welcome to New Muse, a half hour of sonic landscape exploration. The theme of this show is Robots Reflect: What Do Our Machines Think of Us? My name is Jason Ohler and I will be your composer and tour guide as we navigate life from a robot's perspective. We will explore what happens when they adapt the human customs of dream, dance, leisure, spirituality, and nostalgia. In the process hopefully we will be wise enough to catch glimpses of ourselves as reflections in the machine that we create. The piece you just heard is entitled "Elsewhere" and is dedicated to Albert Einstein, the patron saint of robots. Along with so many extraordinary discoveries, Einstein found a hole in reality, a place his equations told him certainly existed but which, by nature's design, could never be visited by humans. He called this place "Elsewhere" and my composition is dedicated to him and his discovery. The next piece is set in a time when robots can not only think but have attained consciousness and with it, the need to sleep and the need to dream. The piece is called Running from the Children, a sonic depiction of a robot's first nightmare in which it is being chased by multitudes of smiling children who want to play tag. Like us, the robot will awake and wonder which world is real, what the dream meant, and where the programming came from that made it so afraid of the children.	1:00	60

	I will join you half way through with some commentary		
Music	A Nightmare of Children; CD Last Glimpse, #5	1:30	90
Speaking while "Last Glimpse" plays softly in the background	Computer is a Latin word, a combination of the words "com" and "putare", com meaning together, putare meaning to "to think", giving us the machine with which we think together, and ultimately the machine which thinks for itself, the robot. We assume that Latin is all but extinct except as the language of scientific classification and the Catholic mass. Yet, it is everywhere, lurking just below the surface, like the word computer itself, and like computers themselves, which are everywhere, whether we see them or not, embedded in the things we use every day and don't think to think about. The computer world gallops off with our lives without our knowing it, unstoppable, invisible, invincible, forever with us, forever changing how we live and speak, forming a subconscious layer of culture, just like Latin.	0:58	50
Fade up music	Play another minute or so of "Nightmare"	1:00	60
Talking	Do robots chide our need for fun as an inefficient waste of shame? No matter. Even robots need to dance, for which we should be grateful because when robots are dancing, they aren't thinking, and when they aren't thinking, they leave us alone. We share with our robots a need for dances of rhythmic repetition which allow us to forget who we are and to fill in the blanks of the moment. The following collage of five robot dance tunes blends a number of different kinds of music, from the stately to the angry, from the coordinated to the chaotic; you will even hear a touch of tango, and perchance feel a sense of visceral violation as metal and silicon attempt something once reserved only for the world of flesh and human desire…	0:50	50
Music Note	Cross fade all pieces, 10-15 seconds	0:0	0
Music	Steel beat #1; CD 2, #21	1:00	60

Music	Music--Robot Dance #1; CD 1, #7 • Fade up at 1:17 for 10 seconds • Play until 3:08 • Fade from 3:08 to 3:18 (minus 5 for fade) Production Notes: • Maybe just start it at 1:40 • Cross fade to Robot Dance #2; CD 2, 31	1:56	117
Music	Music -- Robot Dance #2; CD 2, 31 Production note turn up at 0:25?	1:30	90
Music	Robot dance#3 - pandemonium-tango; CD 2, #4 Production Note: Followed by whammy bar (CD 3&4, #32)?	0:44	44
Music	Steel Beat #2; CD Last Glimpse, #9	2:38	158
Music Note	Crossfading will eliminate 4 15 second slots		-60
Talking	Don't let their shiny, detached exteriors fool you. Even robots need mythology to differentiate themselves from the outsiders among them. Like us, their complexity exceeds their ability to understand who they are and they too turn to mythology to avoid chaos. Along with the natural ecosystem there is now a tekosystem, a second nature as complicated and interconnected as the biosphere but comprised entirely of machines, plastic and wires and held together by data that is as ever present as air. The robots worship the tekosystem, a practice they call technianity, a belief system created of, by and for machines. Like us, robots need to believe in something	1:10	70

	irrational, unexplainable and beyond themselves. They too need to chant, sway, and beat on drums, whether real or imaginary, tactile or virtual. Let's join them at one of their holy celebrations and watch:		
Music	It's November 1, 1995; CD 2, #26 Production Note: • Turn up at 2:09 • Start 10 second fade 2:40 to avoid abrupt ending	2:50	170
Talking	Do robots vacation? Where does their programming take them when they need to get away? The next five pieces answer that question. The first of these is Mars, a place of austere beauty, whose intense hardship inverts to tranquility. The next three pieces chronicle a Robot's trip to a zoo in which birds and machines play in ways that sooth the mechanical mind. In and among the noise you will hear engineered afterthoughts following Mark Whitman's flute everywhere as it floats from pond to pond. Lastly you will visit the Green Chamber, a place of such peace and beauty that even robots fear going and not being able to leave. Mars and the Green Chamber were performed using an Elgit, an instrument which has the same relationship with the electric guitar as the fiddle has with the violin.	0:55	55
Music	Mars theme; CD 3&4, #25	1:24	84
Music	Falcon 1; CD 3&4, #34	1:00	60
Music	Falcon 2; CD 3&4, #36	1:20	80
Music	Falcon Flying; CD Last Glimpse, #8	1:01	61
Music	Green Chamber; CD 3&4,	1:05	65
Talking	Picasso said art is a lie through which we see the truth. Robert Frost said that poetry played a small but vital part in life, like a carburetor. McLuhan said that it was the artist's job to act like an early warning system, a beacon in the night piercing the fog of uncertainty and reporting back about what lies ahead. I am sure of one thing. If we don't use the technology to make art, the technology will make art out of us. Some of our technology will be programmed for kindness, but others will have an	0:56	56

	attitude, showing the same impatience with us that we now show with it. Thanks for being with us on New Muse. I am going to end with a composition I wrote in response to the question, "When a robot feels nostalgia, what does that sound like?" This is Jason Ohler, bidding you all happy days.		
Music	Last Glimpse; CD Last Glimpse, #2	2:45	165
			27.63

Notes:

- From the Latin com putare - to reckon together; com (together in mind, mentally) + putare, to think, reckon.