Sci-fi Highs

Planet of the Apes (Intrada). An early landmark for Jerry Goldsmith. This jagged, inventive music is, naturally, reminiscent of his style on TV's *The Twilight Zone* and contains a justly famous cue—"The Hunt"—that incorporates a ram's horn.

Alien trilogy. Few series have given birth to such diverse and satisfying movie music. *Alien* (Silva Screen), by Goldsmith, is genuinely unnerving; *Aliens* (Varèse), by James Horner, is foreboding whenever it isn't plunging headlong into the fray; and *Alien³* (MCA) combines a clever but creepy musical signature for the nasty creatures with a contemplative, religious tone that befits the movie's thematic concerns.
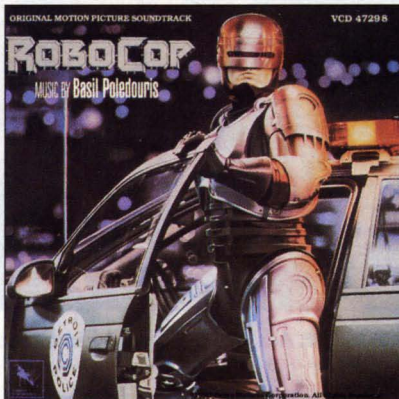
NO GENRE frees the composer's imagination as readily as science fiction. Grand statements abound—a modest sci-fi score is about as common as a low-key opera. Here are a few classic examples, offering everything from Wagnerian might to cheeky sambas.

Alex North's "2001" (Varèse Sarabande). Possibly the greatest score *not* in a movie. It was reportedly commissioned by Stanley Kubrick to appease the studio, even though he never intended to use it. Now, some 25 years later, we can finally hear North's work. From the dramatic organ flourish in "Main Title" to the charming waltz of "Space Station Docking" (where Kubrick used "The Blue Danube"), it was well worth the wait.

"Star Wars" Trilogy (Twentieth Century Fox Film Scores). An exceptionally impressive four-CD set that does right by the John Williams triptych: one CD for each film, a fourth for miscellaneous cues, and a lavishly illustrated booklet with track-by-track commentary. Pair it with the equally expansive FoxVideo laserdisc boxed set and you could spend weeks reading, watching, and listening to George Lucas's masterwork—and months despairing that he won't continue the saga.

Law and orchestra: *Be careful, folks—Big Brother is listening.*

Back on Earth: John Corigliano's *Altered States* (RCA Victor), an alternately frenetic and lyric piece; Basil Poledouris's melodramatic *RoboCop* (Varèse); and Michael Kamen's witty *Brazil* (Milan), featuring well-chosen bits of dialogue, Kate Bush, and enough versions of "Brazil" to drive anyone slightly daft.   MICHAEL GILTZ