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Hide, evolver! It's a *ROBOT* *INVASION!*

Well, at least it sounds an awful lot like a robot -- it's the **vocoder**, and its our topic for this week's episode of The Sound Of Plaid. For those that slept through the breakdancing craze in the 80's or Clockwork Orange in the 70's, the vocoder is that studio gadget that takes a human voice like yours and transforms it into a transformer ("more than meets the eye..."). But the vocoder's history is more than beats -- it was a top-secret military project that heads of state used to speak securely throughout World War II.

This bizarre and unlikely army-to-electro history is detailed in the book [How To Wreck A Nice Beach](#) by Dave Tompkins. It's a great read, loaded with great tales of how this music studio magic trick started its career by saving (or maybe destroying) the world, serving as a private telephone line between presidents and prime ministers. It's also loaded with a great playlist of vocoder-laced music, be it the Clockwork Orange soundtrack, Kraftwerk, the majority of electro, Daft Punk, and beyond.

Join TradeMark and Frilly for **the secret history of the vocoder** on this week's episode of The Sound Of Plaid, live from the [Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej](#) (aka the Center for Contemporary Art) in [Ujazdowski Castle](#) in Warsaw, Poland. Many chances to hear the show, and if you can't make the times below, you can hear it at [The Sound Of Plaid Archives](#) later in the week.

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