



## Bowie: A Biography

By Marc Spitz

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### Bowie: A Biography By Marc Spitz

An expansive biography of David Bowie, one of the twentieth century's greatest music and cultural icons.

From noted author and rock 'n' roll journalist Marc Spitz comes a major David Bowie biography to rival any other. Following Bowie's life from his start as David Jones, an R & B-loving kid from Bromley, England, to his rise to rock 'n' roll aristocracy as David Bowie, Bowie recounts his career but also reveals how much his music has influenced other musicians and forever changed the landscape of the modern era. Along the way, Spitz reflects on how growing up with Bowie as his soundtrack and how writing this definitive book on Bowie influenced him in ways he never expected, adding a personal dimension that Bowie fans and those passionate about art and culture will connect with and that no other bio on the artist offers.

Bowie takes an in-depth look at the culture of postwar England in which Bowie grew up, the mod and hippie scenes of swinging London in the sixties, the sex and drug-fueled glitter scene of the early seventies when Bowie's alter-ego Ziggy Stardust was born, his rise to global stardom in the eighties and his subsequent status as an elder statesman of alternative culture. Spitz puts each incarnation of Bowie into the context of its era, creating a cultural time line that is intriguing both for its historical significance as well as for its delineation of this rock 'n' roll legend, the first musician to evolve a coherent vision after the death of the sixties dream.

Amid the sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll mayhem, a deeper portrait of the artist emerges. Bowie's early struggles to go from follower to leader, his tricky relationship with art and commerce and Buddhism and the occult, his complicated family life, his open romantic relationship and, finally, his perceived disavowal of all that made him a touchstone for outcasts are all thoughtfully explored. A fresh evaluation of his recorded work, as well as his film, stage and video performances, is included as well.

Based on a hundred original interviews with those who knew him best and those familiar with his work, including ex-wife Angie Bowie, former Bowie manager Kenneth Pitt, Siouxsie Sioux, Camille Paglia, Dick Cavett, Todd Haynes, Ricky Gervais and Peter Frampton, Bowie gives us not only a portrait of one of the

most important artists in the last century, but also an honest examination of a truly revolutionary artist and the unique impact he's had across generations.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Despite the plethora of existing books about the British glam rocker (e.g., David Buckley's *Strange Fascination*), Spitz, formerly of *Spin* magazine and the author of a look at the punk band Green Day (*Nobody Likes You*), concentrates on the complex evolution of Bowie's music to deliver an evenhanded, critically thorough, while still reverential life of the Thin White Duke. Born David Jones in the Brixton suburbs of London in 1947, Bowie treaded the musical edges from blues to mod to rock-and-roll, moving from band to band in his teens and trying out different personas. Assuming the name of an American frontiersman who died at the Alamo, Bowie took his cues from influences as diverse as Bob Dylan, the Velvet Underground, and Marcel Marceau, playing with mime, theater, fashion and sheer showmanship. In the beginning, record companies didn't know how to classify him, with albums like *Space Oddity*, *The Man Who Sold the World* and *Hunky Dory*; it was *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust* and *Spiders from Mars*, depicting Bowie's red-haired rooster haircut and bisexual persona, that sparked the public's fancy.

Phenomenal success ensued, and even in his most cocaine-fueled paranoid period during the mid-1970s, Bowie never stopped changing himself, constantly experimenting with new forms, be they Kabuki, disco, New Wave, punk or Brit pop. Spitz concentrates on the heady years culminating in *Scary Monsters* and underscores the deafening void that Bowie's recent silence has left in the music world. (Oct.)

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#### Review

“BOWIE is inspired, edge-worn, loud, quiet, observant, humble, gorgeous, and humane. If the record business loved music as much as Marc Spitz does, there would still be a record business.” —Dan Kennedy, author of *Rock On: An Office Power Ballad*

“A breezy, well-lit portrait of the ever-enigmatic rocker . . . Spitz’s encyclopedic knowledge and obvious appreciation for Bowie’s work separate this book from countless cookie-cutter rock stories.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Spitz concentrates on the complex evolution of Bowie’s music to deliver an evenhanded, critically thorough, while still reverential, life of the Thin White Duke.” —*Publishers Weekly*

*From the Hardcover edition.*

#### About the Author

MARC SPITZ’s writing on rock ’n’ roll and popular culture has appeared in *Spin*, the *New York Times*, *Maxim*, *Nylon*, *Blender* and *Uncut* (UK). He is the author of *How Soon Is Never?*; *Too Much, Too Late*; and *Nobody Likes You: Inside the Turbulent Life, Times, and Music of Green Day* and coauthor with Brendan Mullen of *We Got the Neutron Bomb: The Untold Story of L.A. Punk*.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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#### **Todd Robinson:**

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