



Bowie: A Biography

Marc Spitz, Angela Bowie (contributor)

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Finally an expansive biography of 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.

Bowie: A Biography Details

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From Reader Review Bowie: A Biography for online ebook

Dave Schwensen says

It's very clear how much work the author put into researching this book. It seems he left no moon rock unturned or space capsule unexplored (thanks to Major Tom and Ziggy Stardust for the references). It wasn't all smooth reading, but the parts that were – Bowie's rise to fame and superstar status – seemed to breeze by at warp speed.

Bowie is interesting and confusing. It's what sets him apart from other rock stars of his generation. The author met the challenge of finding him in this book. But after reading I still don't feel I completely know who he is as a person and artist. But then again I doubt too many people outside of Bowie's inner circle really do.

The tone and depth of this book seems to change as much as Bowie's on stage persona's. The book deserves a five star rating when it goes into the Bowie legend and history, especially in his early days as an artist and his struggles and efforts to make it. Then it propels us into the heady days of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars. And beyond through London, Berlin, Geneva, Los Angeles, New York... It's Bowie and though he's like a chameleon, the author gives us at least an understanding of him

But the book becomes bogged down in attempting to dissect and understand Bowie's artistry as a songwriter and performer. I thought it was distracting not only to mention every song on every album, but also a description of the music and suspected meanings. Okay, we can get that online just by doing a search for each particular song. As a reader I would have rather skipped the nonessential details and dig deeper into more about Bowie and how his life helped him develop these songs.

Still I enjoyed it and for every Bowie fan this is an important read. A must read? That depends on how deep your fandom goes.

Donna Lyn says

I'm changing my review of this book. I stayed up way too late for too many nights reading this book but I could not put it down. Marc Spitz did an amazing job writing this book, I can't imagine the work he put into it. It is very detailed. I think the reason I was so compelled was because Bowie's rise to stardom was during my childhood and Bowie's music was played loud and often in my father's house (as was Pink Floyd and the Eagles). I was completely taken by Bowie back then and even today as I watch his YouTube videos he is still ah-mazing. The book explained a lot of his journey which yes, I was one of those fans who felt abandoned when he put out the disco album, now I understand he was just evolving and recreating and ahead of his time once again. The whole drug thing like so many books I read just breaks my heart. It opens the door to creative song writing and genius yet just as quickly it seeks to kill, steal and destroy. Why people want to legalize the stuff is beyond me. It's not worth it...Bowie is one of the 'lucky' ones to have survived everything he's put his body through over the years. and we are lucky to still have him putting out great music.

Louise says

I was never a Bowie fan, but after finishing this book, I think I missed something. I followed the book with YouTube. As the songs were mentioned, I listened. The Dick Cavett Interview, the Bing Crosby Christmas special, the Ashes to Ashes video, the 1979 SNL (audio only), the prayer for Freddie Mercury -- all are priceless today, but in context of their time must have been striking. Bowie was far more than his punk/skinhead (or whatever the) image. He created a body of work ("Major Tom", Changes, Heroes, Sold the World...) that will live beyond our times.

Spitz's background as a writer/observer of the music industry for "Crawdaddy" comes through. His strength is his critic's knowledge of Bowie, his material, its creation, its marketing and its position in the development of popular music and the music industry. A good biography, however, is more than a series of reviews, events and career milestones.

There is some attempt to interpret Bowie as a person, but for this, the book is disappointing. For instance the marriage to Angie is reportage when a biography calls for analysis. Bowie's relationship with his half brother is all but dropped. There is mention and dismissal, but no explanation, of the Nazi imagery that has been associated with Bowie.

There is a heavy reliance on interviews which seem to be cut and pasted in. Some seem to be there to prove a point Spitz wants to make. Some seem to be there because Spitz has them, not because of their significance. Some quotes, such as Angie on David's brother's death, are the sole analysis of what seem to be significant events.

The interviews often have statements inserted as truths when they are opinions. For instance Spitz quotes Camille Pagila on p. 318 "anyone who is still a rebel in middle age is a fraud!" to support the idea that Bowie could not go on with his persona. Chapter 23 closes with Destri (of Blondie) saying that "that night, David Bowie opened the door to the eighties" to support the idea that Bowie was THE harbinger of the 80's. Sweeping statements aren't restricted to the interviews. On p. 332, Spitz, himself, says "All suicide is by definition a selfish act."

Some of the photos don't fit the text. For instance, there is no photo of either Angie or Iman, but one of Elizabeth Taylor who doesn't really feature in Bowie's life or this book. Why is there a photo of Bowie in Moscow when this trip is hardly mentioned? Other photos seem to be publicity shots; they're interesting, but in a biography, more personal photos are expected.

The author is at his best when he strays from the article writing genre. He made a good start with the background on Bowie's family and how the World War II formed not just the generations of the Bowie family, but also the conditions for the emergence of the rock and roll culture.

Spitz lists an impressive number of Bowie biographies in his introduction. Some are rated very highly by Amazon reviewers, but if this is the one available to you, go ahead and read it. The story will hold your attention. I suggest readers read it like I did: with YouTube handy. It will be your own simulation of what is probably the future of the online book... the text with links instead of footnotes ... and will add to your reading experience.

Tosh says

Do we need another biography on David Bowie? Well, frankly yes! There is one other great biography on Bowie by David Buckley called "Strange Fascination." That one is good because Buckley went out of the way to interview all of Bowie's past and present musicians.

What is totally fab about Marc Spitz's biography is his research on the early teenage and career years of David. He also tracked down Bowie's first major manager and supporter Kenneth Pitt, who gives great insight in the world of 'gay' management at the time as well as what it was like in representing David Bowie in the mid-60's.

For sure he never was he an over-night star. Bowie struggled for fame and fortune for at least ten years before he hit it big with the Ziggy decade. Spitz who is a hardcore Bowie fanatic captures the location or place of Bowie's important years. His writing on West Berlin and Bowie's old London neighborhood is quite fantastic. Reading it I get the presence of these old neighborhoods and how it affected Bowie's art. The great thing about David Bowie is that he was totally inspired by his location and the people around that world in whatever specific time.

Also one gets a better appreciation of Bowie's first wife Angie, which one doesn't get in various biographies or literature. My only complaint, which is very slight, is that Bowie's later years are not as interesting as compared to his career in the 60's. Mostly I think due to the interest of the author who really researched the 60's era Bowie very well and how that was a platform for his much later creative brilliant albums, etc.

In other words this is pretty much an essential book on David Bowie. Read it.

Przemek Skoczy?ski says

Problem z takimi ksi??kami, to problem z definicj? "przek?adu" rodem ze studiów filologicznych. Czy przek?ad to nadal ksi??ka autora widniej?cego w tytule czy mo?e oddzielny byt, w my?l zasady ?e ka?de t?umaczenie to pisanie ksi??ki na nowo? Bariery j?zykowe sprawiaj?, ?e faktycznie przekazanie danej my?li w innym j?zyku bywa niemo?liwe i rola t?umacza, by odda? ducha orygina?u jest ogromna.

Je?li na podstawie polskiego wydania "Biografii" mia?bym domy?la? si? cech orygina?u, to pewnie oceni?bym t? pozycj? na 7/10. Spitz jest bardzo drobiazgowy, analizuje tw?rczo?? Davida album po albumie, dla fanów to wr?cz kopalnia wiedzy o arty?cie i jego wytworach. Jednocze?nie ma?o tu obiektywizmu, a je?li ju? autor si? o niego stara, wychodzi mu to dosy? sztucznie (np. umieszczanie na si??wypowiedzianych przez kogo? s?ów krytyki, by je potem negowa?).

Uwielbiam Bowiego, ale traktowanie go jak Boga, do którego inni nie maj? startu i bez którego nie by?oby kultury popularnej, nie s?u?y jemu samemu (przyk?ad: zestawianie go z McCartneyem czy Dylanem i okre?lanie jako zdecydowanie najzdolniejszego - dosy? karko?omne i ?mieszne). Czytelnik jednak wybacz? i si?gnie po ksi??k?, bo to pozycja o rozmachu, jakiego polscy fani Davida wcze?niej nie do?wiadczyli.

Gdzie zatem problem? T?umaczenie jest fatalne (niestety jest to typowe dla rodzimych przek?adów ksi??ek dotyczc?cych muzyki popularnej). Polska wersja oferuje koszmarn?, skomplikowan? sk?adni? i cz?sto trudno si? domy?li? o co chodzi w zdaniu, jakby autor stara? si? t?umaczy? dos?ownie i na si?? wyraz po wyrazie.

Dodatkowo sporo tu b??dów wynikaj?cych z niewiedzy (mylenie nazw kapel z nazwami ich albumów, mówienie o kulturze "modów" itd.) Je?li wi?c rodzima wersja "Biografii" jest oddzielnym bytem, to jest bytem dosy? niechlujnym i chyba szkodzi samem Spitzowi.

Jacqueline says

As compelling as Bowie is, this biography is not. It's more of a summation of interviews and speculation on Bowie, with occasional testimony from the very few people the author seemed to talk to. Writing wise, it's very "essay-like", with far too much personal input from the author and the phrase "One can imainge..." used excessively. So much of this bio is completely redundant as well (I do not need to know the life and childhood of David Bowie's roommate for half a year in 1968, thanks). Actual aspect of Bowie's life are glossed over (even the birth of his son accounted for just one paragraph, only to be mentioned max-five times more) and focused more on chronologically outlining his album releases and tours. Bowie: A Biography is more an extended wikipedia article written by a college student than a compelling, detailed biography.

Lisa Findley says

I liked it because I like Bowie, but I didn't learn much more than a Wikipedia scan would've told me. The biggest advantage Spitz has over other biographers is that he wrote his after theirs, so he has the '90s and '00s to include, but then he doesn't do much with that time period, either. He just says "I didn't know anything about Iman before this book, turns out she did some stuff" about Bowie's iconic supermodel wife, and "I sure wish he'd make some more albums" about Bowie's movement away from the spotlight in latter years.

Spitz occasionally aims for larger themes of the Bowie legend and his influence on contemporary and later artists, but he does it in fits and starts that don't amount to much. I understand that he has a lot of ground to cover, but too often we fly through pivotal moments in Bowie's life and stick to studio productions, which isn't necessarily what I'm looking for in the story of a person's life.

He does, however, cast new light on Bowie's early manager, Michael Pitt, and gives some much-needed balance to the Angela Bowie story, who is far more intelligent and interesting than other biographers or most Bowie fans give her credit for.

Malcolm Frawley says

This is not the first Bowie biog I have read, & it won't be the last (Paul Morley's The Age Of Bowie is in my to-read pile) but it is a compelling read for any fan, even those of us who already know a lot about the, in my opinion, 1 true genius of rock music. I loved Spitz's point of view. He is an unapologetic fan, though not a contemporary of Bowie, & his occasional brief interjections into his own life are both justified & illuminating. He has researched well with what appears to have been long interviews with major players in the life of The Dame & thankfully avoids any sensationalism. The book was published in 2009 so misses The Next Day & Blackstar &, of course, the extraordinary out-pouring of worldwide grief that Bowie's death prompted. But it is an excellent addition to the canon. One quibble, & this has occurred in other biogs I have read, is that Bowie turns 40 on page 337 of a 402 page book. There are still over 20 years to go & that is

crammed into the remaining pages. But highly recommended nonetheless.

Katie Glanz says

The content of this book was quite entertaining, but Spitz's style felt a little too dry and journalistic for my taste. No surprises here though, he is a music journalist, and he did a wonderful job writing precisely and informatively about Bowie and his influences, and the legions of musicians he has inspired.

Spitz's personal antidotes concerning his experiences with the David Bowie persona are, for the most part amusing, however a few seem a little trite and random.

Personally, I could have done without the lengthy account of Bowie's childhood, but I do recognize that this is a must for any author who wants to expose the seeds of genius. The story became much more compelling when Spitz began describing the Bowie of the 1970's. Understandably, he seems to be much more enthusiastic about Bowie circa the Diamond Dogs era or Bowie as Ziggy Stardust. It was worth reading this 400 page plus book just for those juicy little revelations about Bowie and his 70's pals (Iggy Pop, Lou Reed, Andy Warhol, etc...)

While Spitz wrote eagerly and positively about 70's Bowie, I was a little disappointed about some of his depictions of 80's Bowie. Yeah yeah yeah, the Labyrinth was cheesy, and yes, some of Bowie's 80's adventures were a little disastrous, but as someone raised on the Labyrinth (a masterpiece of set and costume design, and movie I still absolutely adore), I felt Spitz could have been a little gentler in his treatment of cheesy 80's Bowie--always and forever, my favorite Bowie.--

Also, just on a personal note. I cannot for the life of me fathom why Spitz kept referencing Camille Paglia. As a feminist, I think she is absolutely unbearable. I found her insensitive and ill-informed comments about gay activism especially distasteful.

Overall, this was nicely written and extensive and detailed account of Bowie's life and music. I am so in the Bowie zone right now. All I really want to do for the next few days is watch Velvet Goldmine, The Hunger, and the Labyrinth, and listen to Low and Scary Monsters on repeat.

Virginia says

I put off writing this review for a while for two reasons: both the author and the subject are dead, and that wounds me painfully every time I sit at my keyboard to write this review. I've had some time to put distance between me and Bowie's death, and I've really had most of my lifetime to work out my on-again off-again fandom with Bowie. But I was in the early stages of my relationship with Spitz and he reminded me so much of a friend of mine from graduate school whom I had recently lost, so learning that Spitz was dead after I started this book was awful. There's so much of himself in this biography and there's so much of it that I identify with. So therein lies the tragedy. Spitz loved, loved, loved music with a gut-churning passion that I haven't seen since college if truth be told, and at 40 I miss that passion for art and music and creation, and then in Spitz's case, you die.

Spitz's biography might not be the best or most complete Bowie biography, but it is deeply passionate, the

most fanboy-driven biography, and truly the most American one out there. It is well-written and he did obtain candid interviews with Angela Bowie which give him a slightly different take on the women in Bowie's life, especially his early career, that we don't get in other sources. I read half of this book before visiting the *David Bowie Is* exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum and I was rather struck by the erasure of Angela Bowie's influence in Bowie's early career. Then I read the second half of Spitz's book which does conclude in 2009, but it's clear that Bowie was obsessed with the business of his legacy and controlling how it would be voiced and portrayed and his relationship with Angela was something that he completely erased throughout his life straight through to compiling his archives. Who's to say what the truth is but it really is interesting.

I loved the book and there's so much I want to say about Bowie from it, about his early days, and those crazy but productive 70s. So. Much. Cocaine. About all his influences and all his business deals, what he learned and how he learned it. I was excited to read past the mid-80s and into the latter 80s and 90s because I hadn't read a Bowie bio since 1987. I didn't know how embittered he truly was by the Glass Spider tour, that he actually burned and bashed the three-story spider in a New Zealand field, but then years later wanted the prototype for his archives. That was a standout story of rock star excess and 80s excess without the numbing comfort of cocaine. Oh, sobriety! Spitz' chapters on Tin Machine and Bowie's collaborations with Trent Reznor gave me some better appreciation for that time period, though this part of the book did seem rushed. Source material was probably a little thinner, but the interviews here were quite good. And while the book ends with Bowie after his heart surgeries, it would have been a wonderful thing if Spitz had lived long enough to add those additional chapters to cover Bowie's final five years of productive work.

Ah, well. It's August now. And I myself am thinking of Bowie, yes, but of Spitz and one of his famous August rituals as well: playing Don Henley's "Boys of Summer" at just the right moment:

Turn on your TV and there are back-to-school commercials for school supplies (they are lining the drug store aisles as well). There's pre-season NFL football... There's really only one thing missing, and every year around this time, I wonder if it's yet time to undergo a certain ritual.

I say "around" this time, because it's still a little too soon today, and will be so tomorrow. It can't happen too late either, or it loses its poignancy. The timing has to be just right. It's in my queue, but I have not and will not press play until something in my brain sparks: "This is it. Now."

And I play "The Boys of Summer" by Don Henley.

It happens every year, some time between the horrible dog days of summer and Labor Day. I only play it once. It only requires about five minutes (four minutes and forty-seven seconds, to be precise). That's enough for me.

I really feel it, like almost no other song. I sing along. I cry. I hold my headphones to my ears with cupped hands, as tightly as I can. I obsess.

Spitz loved listening to music like no other music writer. Like I miss Bowie, I will miss him, too.

Scott Rhee says

David Bowie, the legend and the man, died this year, 2016. The vacuum left by his passing is felt profoundly by his fans. I originally read this book and reviewed it in 2013. As I sit and edit it, Bowie's beautiful final album, "Blackstar" is playing in the background...

The first vinyl records (Remember those? Big, round, black, shiny disks with tiny grooves that played music when you put in on a turntable and dropped the needle down? I know, I love them, too...) I ever bought were Journey's "Escape", the self-titled album by Madness ("Our house in the middle of our street..."), and "Let's Dance" by David Bowie.

I still have them, somewhere; most likely tucked away on a shelf next to my parents' surprisingly hip vinyl collection. I grew up listening to Tom Jones, ABBA, Three Dog Night, The Guess Who, the Kinks, the Beatles: not a bad soundtrack for my childhood.

While I liked Journey and Madness a lot, throughout the years my fascination for Bowie grew and matured in a way that didn't happen for most of the other bands and singers I had in my record collection. (The Police will always have a place in my heart, Jackson Browne was a memorable fling, and the Pretenders still kick ass, but I'm not sure what I was thinking with Rick Springfield, Menudo or Bruce Willis's one and only foray---thank God!---in music with his "Return of Bruno" blues album...)

I think my sustained love for Bowie is due to the fact that, like the few rare artists that can completely change themselves, in a good way, to suit the changing times (Madonna, Siouxsie Sioux, Trent Reznor) the Bowie that I loved in 7th grade is not the Bowie I loved as a senior in high school is not the Bowie I loved in my early 20s is not the Bowie I love today, at age 40. The many metamorphoses that Bowie has gone through is incredible.

I rarely read autobiographies or biographies of musicians or singer/songwriters. Not that I lack respect for them or their creative process. On the contrary, I have tremendous respect for musicians, and I love music.

In point of fact, I just never found any of my favorite bands or singers to be the subject of a biography. I have yet to find a biography of Siouxsie and the Banshees. Not many writers are willing to tackle the brilliance behind They Might Be Giants or Oingo Boingo. I did read a biography of Kurt Cobain once, which I liked, but much of it read like a police report.

Other current well-known autobiographies of famous rock stars have not interested me that much: Keith Richards's book would probably bore and annoy me with all the rampant drug stories, and while I would someday like to tackle Bob Dylan's autobiography, I don't think I'm ready yet for a commitment that big.

Bowie, on the other hand, has always intrigued me. He has, apparently, intrigued many other biographers as well, as he has been the subject of literally dozens of books. It seems odd (I mean, he's one guy, right?) until one looks at the many variations of self-identity that Bowie has gone through in his life.

Some biographers have written solely about his Ziggy Stardust period. Others have looked at Bowie from a literary standpoint (he is quite poetic in his lyrics) and others from a strictly fashion sense.

I chose to read "Bowie: A Biography" by author Mark Spitz for no other reason than because it was there, and it is probably the most appropriate place to start for a Bowie-phile. It is not comprehensive the way David Buckley's 700-page biography, "Strange Fascination: David Bowie---The Definitive Story" is. (That's next on my list.) Spitz's book is a fun, fast-paced read written by a fan FOR fans.

Bowie, born David Robert Jones in Brixton, U.K. in 1947, grew up in a seemingly normal suburban family. His parents were caring, kind people, although lacking perhaps in the physical affection department (a trait somewhat typical for upper-middle class Brits, one of those stereotypes that has some truth to it).

His parents were very supportive of Bowie from an early age, encouraging his early interest in music and art where some parents of the day may have been somewhat leery.

His childhood shaped him in ways Bowie never realized until much later, according to Spitz, especially in regards to Bowie's life-long fear that he would someday go insane. Mental illness, apparently, ran in his family. Bowie's older brother, Terry, suffered from schizophrenia, and Bowie, who would look up to his brother as a role model and source of inspiration his entire life until Terry's death, was always waiting for the other shoe to drop and for him to succumb to the inevitable madness he knew he was coming. It is, in many ways, why Bowie pushed himself so hard and far in his musical career. Spitz notes that Bowie may have just been trying to beat the Devil.

Early attempts at bands (there were many of them) were failures for Bowie, but unlike some artists, Bowie was never discouraged by failure. There was, apparently, something to be learned in everything.

His first album, a self-titled (which was re-released in 2012 after many years of being out of print) was quickly forgotten. It is considered by most critics to be typical of the Brit Pop movement of the time and nothing to write home about.

His next album, however, "Space Oddity" would fare much better and would give Bowie his first chart-topper with his famous title track. It would, however, be his fifth album, "Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars", that would catapult him into rock stardom.

The rest, as they say, is history. And, oh, what a fantastic history.

Bowie's oeuvre of songs reads like a compilation of The History of Western Civilization Through David Bowie: "Changes", "Suffragette City", "Jean Genie", "Diamond Dogs", "Heroes", "Fame", "Modern Love", "Let's Dance", "China Girl", and the list goes on...

Those are just his radio singles, and they only cover his musical output through the mid-80s. The 90s and the 2000s would see Bowie usher himself into the 21st century quite majestically with albums like 'Earthling', "Heathen", and "Reality".

Spitz, unfortunately, ends his book in 2009, on a sad note that Bowie's last album ("Reality", 2003) really would be Bowie's last album. As if.

As we speak (or, technically, as I write), Bowie's newest album in ten years, "The Next Day" is currently available in record stores (oops, I mean Amazon), and it is awesome. It is, in my opinion, Bowie's darkest album, full of righteous anger at the injustices in the world and, especially, in the U.S., his adopted country for which he has a love-hate relationship. (Then again, don't most of us?)

Bowie still manages to fascinate and enthrall, and I'm sure that he will continue to do so until his dying day, in whatever new and wonderful manifestation he adopts.

Dianna says

i thought this book would be more interesting -- it's BOWIE, man.

Hanna says

Elämäkerran parasta antia olivat ehdottomasti laajalti avatut vaikutteet ja epämukavin osuus suomennetut lyriikat (#puolukkasisko), joiden tunnistamisessa saattoi mennä tovi. Maailma tuntuu taas vähän avarammalta ja iski into ottaa kuunteluun vähemmän tuttua myöhäisempää tuotantoa.

Mart Allard says

I have been waiting for this book for months, and to be fair, I have to admitt that I'm listening to Bowie as I write this. If you're looking for it in the stores, it's important to note that it's no longer called "God and Man," which is, of course a quote from the song "Modern Love", but just "Bowie".

I'm beginning to love this book, and I don't often love books about David Bowie. He's intensely private, and has never authorized a bio, so they are usually very dry and informative, as Nicholas Pegg's book "The Complete David Bowie," or wildly inaccurate and not very kind.

So far, this book is kind. This book is accurate. It's already told me at least one thing that I didn't already know, which is pretty amazing in itself. Best of all, the author has included essays about the impact that Bowie has had on his life. So, while I'm not a fan of nonfiction as a rule, this is unfolding like a novel to me, with two characters. I'm looking forward to seeing how it turns out.

Tara says

If you ask anyone who knows me, I'm a huge David Bowie fan. I was browsing my local library and saw this book and just had to pick it up. The only Bowie biography I'd read was his ex-wife's book about their history together called Backstage Passes. It was a pretty good read with a lot of Bowie's history, but it was (obviously) very biased.

Marc Spitz's biography is an incredibly detailed story of David Bowie's life all the way from how his parents met up until his quiet life in the late 2000's. Of course Bowie just released his first album is a decade just this spring, so he's not quite finished with his career yet, even at 66 years old! Even if you're not a fan, you have to admit the man has had quite the career, almost completely reinventing himself every decade.

David Bowie started out as David Jones in London. Even as a child, he knew he wanted to be a famous rock and roll star. Bowie wasn't one of those "instant stars" who was discovered one day out of the blue. He worked hard for a long time before he finally got recognition with his breakout song in the 1960's, "Space Oddity". Although most people recognize it today it actually wasn't a huge hit at first. Bowie probably wasn't considered a well-known rock star until he invented Ziggy Stardust in the early 70s at the onset of the glam rock movement.

Of course he famously retired Ziggy after a few years and adopted several other onstage personalities over the rest of the 1970s (Halloween Jack, The Thin White Duke) and hit his biggest commercial success of his career in the 80s with the Let's Dance album. The 90s brought about a more experimental Bowie and he found some success collaborating with Trent Reznor and touring with Nine Inch Nails. People assumed his 2003 album, Reality, would be his last after he had emergency heart surgery and then stayed quiet until just a few months ago.

This book was so in depth that it's probably not for anyone but Bowie fans. It's not what I'd call "light reading". However, if you're a fan this is a great biography (although I'd also recommend Angie Bowie's book for her interesting inside perspective).
