

David Bowie

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David Bowie



Bowie in Tinley Park, Illinois, during the Heathen Tour, 2002

Born	David Robert Jones
	8 January 1947
	Brixton, London, England
Died	10 January 2016 (aged 69)
	New York City, U.S.
Resting place	Ashes scattered in Bali ^[1]
Occupation	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Singer• songwriter• actor</div>
Years active	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1962–2016</div>
Spouse(s)	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Angie Barnett (m. 1970; div. 1980)• Iman (m. 1992)</div>
Children	2, including Duncan Jones
Musical career	
Genres	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art rock• glam rock• pop• electronic• experimental</div>

Instruments**Vocals****Labels**

- ISO
- RCA
- Virgin
- EMI
- Columbia
- Deram
- Mercury
- BMG
- Pye
- Vocalion
- Parlophone
- Ryko

Associated acts

- Tony Visconti
- Carlos Alomar
- the Riot Squad
- Arnold Corns
- Tin Machine
- the Hype
- Queen
- Iggy Pop
- Arcade Fire
- Brian Eno
- Ryuichi Sakamoto
- Lou Reed
- Adrian Belew
- Mick Ronson
- Reeves Gabrels
- John Lennon
- Nine Inch Nails
- Mick Jagger
- Tina Turner
- Mott the Hoople

Website

www.davidbowie.com

David Robert Jones (8 January 1947 – 10 January 2016), known professionally as **David Bowie** (/ˈboʊi/),^[2] was an English singer, songwriter and actor. He was a leading figure in the music industry and is considered one of the most influential musicians of the 20th century, acclaimed by critics and musicians, particularly

for his innovative work during the 1970s. His career was marked by reinvention and visual presentation, with his music and stagecraft having a significant impact on popular music. During his lifetime, his record sales, estimated at 140 million albums worldwide, made him one of the world's best-selling music artists. In the UK, he was awarded ten platinum album certifications, eleven gold and eight silver, and released eleven number-one albums. In the US, he received five platinum and nine gold certifications. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1996.

Born in Brixton, South London, Bowie developed an interest in music as a child, eventually studying art, music and design before embarking on a professional career as a musician in 1963. "Space Oddity" became his first top-five entry on the UK Singles Chart after its release in July 1969. After a period of experimentation, he re-emerged in 1972 during the glam rock era with his flamboyant and androgynous alter ego Ziggy Stardust. The character was spearheaded by the success of his single "Starman" and album *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*, which won him widespread popularity. In 1975, Bowie's style shifted radically towards a sound he characterised as "plastic soul", initially alienating many of his UK devotees but garnering him his first major US crossover success with the number-one single "Fame" and the album *Young Americans*. In 1976, Bowie starred in the cult film *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, directed by Nicolas Roeg, and released *Station to Station*. The following year, he further confounded musical expectations with the electronic-inflected album *Low* (1977), the first of three collaborations with Brian Eno that came to be known as the "Berlin Trilogy". *"Heroes"* (1977) and *Lodger* (1979) followed; each album reached the UK top five and received lasting critical praise.

After uneven commercial success in the late 1970s, Bowie had UK number ones with the 1980 single "Ashes to Ashes", its parent album *Scary Monsters (and Super Creeps)*, and "Under Pressure", a 1981 collaboration with Queen. He reached his commercial peak in 1983 with *Let's Dance*; the album's title track topped both UK and US charts. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, Bowie continued to experiment with musical styles, including industrial and jungle. He also continued acting; his roles included Major Jack Celliers in *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* (1983), Jareth the Goblin King in *Labyrinth* (1986), Pontius Pilate in *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), and Nikola Tesla in *The Prestige* (2006), among other film and television appearances and cameos. He stopped touring after 2004 and his last live performance was at a charity event in 2006. In 2013, Bowie returned from a decade-long recording hiatus with *The Next Day*. He remained musically active until he died of liver cancer two days after the release of his final album, *Blackstar* (2016).



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Early life

Bowie was born David Robert Jones on 8 January 1947 in Brixton, London. His mother, Margaret Mary "Peggy" (née Burns; 1913–2001),^{[3][4]} was born at Shorncliffe Army Camp near Cheriton, Kent.^[5] Her paternal grandparents were Irish immigrants who had settled in Manchester.^[6] She worked as a waitress at a cinema in Royal Tunbridge Wells.^[7] His father, Haywood Stenton "John" Jones (1912–1969),^{[3][4]} was from Doncaster,^[8] and worked as a promotions officer for the children's charity Barnardo's. The family lived at 40 Stansfield Road, on the boundary between Brixton and Stockwell in the south London borough of Lambeth. Bowie attended Stockwell Infants School until he was six years old, acquiring a reputation as a gifted and single-minded child—and a defiant brawler.^[9]

In 1953, Bowie moved with his family to Bromley. Two years later, he started attending Burnt Ash Junior School. His voice was considered "adequate" by the school choir, and he demonstrated above-average abilities in playing the recorder.^[10] At the age of nine, his dancing during the newly-introduced music and movement classes was strikingly imaginative: teachers called his interpretations "vividly artistic" and his poise "astonishing" for a child.^[10] The same year, his interest in music was further stimulated when his father brought home a collection of American 45s by artists including the Teenagers, the Platters, Fats Domino, Elvis Presley, and Little Richard.^{[11][12]} Upon listening to Little Richard's song "Tutti Frutti", Bowie would later say that he had "heard God".^[13]

Bowie was first impressed with Presley when he saw his cousin dance to "Hound Dog".^[12] By the end of the following year, he had taken up the ukulele and teachest bass, begun to participate in skiffle sessions with friends, and had started to play the piano; meanwhile, his stage presentation of numbers by both Presley and Chuck Berry—complete with gyrations in tribute to the original artists—to his local Wolf Cub group was described as "mesmerizing ... like someone from another planet".^[12] After taking his eleven-plus exam at the conclusion of his Burnt Ash Junior education, Bowie went to Bromley Technical High School.^[14]

It was an unusual technical school, as biographer Christopher Sandford wrote:

Despite its status it was, by the time David arrived in 1958, as rich in arcane ritual as any [English] public school. There were houses named after eighteenth-century statesmen like Pitt and Wilberforce. There was a uniform, and an elaborate system of rewards and punishments. There was also an accent on languages, science and particularly design, where a collegiate atmosphere flourished under the tutorship of Owen Frampton. In David's account, Frampton led through force of personality, not intellect; his colleagues at Bromley Tech were famous for neither, and yielded the school's most gifted pupils to the arts, a regime so liberal that Frampton actively encouraged his own son, Peter, to pursue a musical career with David, a partnership briefly intact thirty years later.^[14]

Bowie studied art, music, and design, including layout and typesetting. After his half-brother Terry Burns introduced him to modern jazz, his enthusiasm for players like Charles Mingus and John Coltrane led his mother to give him a Grafton saxophone in 1961. He was soon receiving lessons from baritone saxophonist Ronnie Ross.^{[15][16]} He received a serious injury at school in 1962 when his friend George Underwood punched him in the left eye during a fight over a girl. After a series of operations during a four-month hospitalisation,^[17] his doctors determined that the damage could not be fully repaired and Bowie was left with faulty depth perception and a permanently dilated pupil, which gave a false impression of a change in the iris's colour; the eye later became one of Bowie's most recognisable features.^[18] Despite their altercation, Bowie remained on good terms with Underwood, who went on to create the artwork for Bowie's early albums.^[19]

Career

1962–1967: Early career to debut album



A trade ad photo of Bowie in 1967

In 1962, Bowie formed his first band at the age of 15, named the Konrads. Playing guitar-based rock and roll at local youth gatherings and weddings, the Konrads had a varying line-up of between four and eight members, Underwood among them.^[20] When Bowie left the technical school the following year, he informed his parents of his intention to become a pop star. His mother arranged his employment as an electrician's mate. Frustrated by his bandmates' limited aspirations, Bowie left the Konrads and joined another band, the King Bees. He wrote to the newly successful washing-machine entrepreneur John Bloom inviting him to "do for us what Brian Epstein has done for the Beatles—and make another million." Bloom did not respond to the offer, but his referral to Dick James's partner Leslie Conn led to Bowie's first personal management contract.^[21]

Conn quickly began to promote Bowie. The singer's debut single, "Liza Jane", credited to Davie Jones with the King Bees, was not commercially successful. Dissatisfied with the King Bees and their repertoire of Howlin' Wolf and Willie Dixon covers, Bowie quit the band less than a month later to join the Mannish Boys, another blues outfit, who incorporated folk and soul—"I used to dream of being their Mick Jagger", Bowie was to recall.^[21] Their cover of Bobby Bland's "I Pity the Fool" was no more successful than "Liza Jane", and Bowie soon moved on again to join the Lower Third, a blues trio strongly influenced by The Who. "You've Got a Habit of Leaving" fared no better, signalling the end of Conn's contract. Declaring that he would exit the pop music world "to study mime at Sadler's Wells", Bowie nevertheless remained with the Lower Third. His new manager, Ralph Horton, later instrumental in his transition to solo artist, soon witnessed Bowie's move to yet another group, the Buzz, yielding the singer's fifth unsuccessful single release, "Do Anything You Say". While with the Buzz, Bowie also joined the Riot Squad; their recordings, which included one of Bowie's original songs and material by The Velvet Underground, went unreleased. Ken Pitt, introduced by Horton, took over as Bowie's manager.^[22]

Dissatisfied with his stage name as Davy (and Davie) Jones, which in the mid-1960s invited confusion with Davy Jones of The Monkees, Bowie renamed himself after the 19th-century American pioneer James Bowie and the knife he had popularised.^[23] His April 1967 solo single, "The Laughing Gnome", using speeded-up thus high-pitched vocals, failed to chart. Released six weeks later, his album debut, *David Bowie*, an amalgam of pop, psychedelia, and music hall, met the same fate. It was his last release for two years.^[24]

1968–1971: *Space Oddity* to *Hunky Dory*

Bowie met dancer Lindsay Kemp in 1967 and enrolled in his dance class at the London Dance Centre.^[25] He commented in 1972 that meeting Kemp was when his interest in image "really blossomed".^[25] "He lived on his emotions, he was a wonderful influence. His day-to-day life was the most theatrical thing I had ever seen, ever. It was everything I thought Bohemia probably was. I joined the circus."^[26] Studying the dramatic arts under Kemp, from avant-garde theatre and mime to commedia dell'arte, Bowie became immersed in the creation of personae to present to the world. Satirising life in a British prison, meanwhile, the Bowie composition "Over the Wall We Go" became a 1967 single for Oscar; another Bowie song, "Silly Boy Blue", was released by Billy Fury the following year.^[27] In January 1968, Kemp choreographed a dance scene for a BBC play, *The Pistol Shot*, in the Theatre 625 series, and used Bowie with a dancer, Hermione Farthingale;^{[28][29]} the pair began dating, and moved into a London flat together. Playing acoustic guitar, Farthingale formed a group with Bowie and guitarist John Hutchinson; between September 1968 and early 1969 the trio gave a small number of concerts combining folk, Merseybeat, poetry, and mime.^[30] Bowie and Farthingale broke up in early 1969 when she went to Norway to take part in a film, *Song of Norway*;^[31] this affected him, and several songs, such as "Letter to Hermione" and "Life on Mars?" reference her,^{[32][33]} and for the video accompanying "Where Are We Now?", he wore a T-shirt with the words "m/s Song of Norway".^[34] They were last together in January 1969 for the filming of *Love You till Tuesday*, a 30-minute film that was not released until 1984: intended as a promotional vehicle, it featured performances from Bowie's repertoire, including "Space Oddity", which had not been released when the film was made.^[35]

After the break-up with Farthingale, Bowie moved in with Mary Finnigan as her lodger.^[36] During this period he appeared in a Lyons Maid ice cream commercial, and was rejected for another by Kit Kat.^[35] In February and March 1969, he undertook a short tour^[35] with Marc Bolan's duo Tyrannosaurus Rex, as third on the bill, performing a mime act.^[37] On 11 July 1969, "Space Oddity" was released five days ahead of the Apollo 11 launch, and reached the top five in the UK.^[35] Continuing the divergence from rock and roll and blues begun by his work with Farthingale, Bowie joined forces with Finnigan, Christina Ostrom and Barrie Jackson to run a folk club on Sunday nights at the Three Tuns pub in Beckenham High Street.^[36] The club was influenced by the Arts Lab movement, developing into the Beckenham Arts Lab and became extremely popular. The Arts Lab hosted a free festival in a local park, the subject of his song "Memory of a Free Festival".^[38]

Bowie's second album followed in November; originally issued in the UK as *David Bowie*, it caused some confusion with its predecessor of the same name, and the early US release was instead titled *Man of Words/Man of Music*; it was reissued internationally in 1972 by RCA Records as *Space Oddity*. Featuring philosophical post-hippie lyrics on peace, love, and morality, its acoustic folk rock occasionally fortified by harder rock, the album was not a commercial success at the time of its release.^[39]

Bowie met Angela Barnett in April 1969. They married within a year. Her impact on him was immediate, and her involvement in his career far-reaching, leaving manager Ken Pitt with limited influence which he found frustrating.^[40] Having established himself as a solo artist with "Space Oddity", Bowie began to sense a lacking: "a full-time band for gigs and recording—people he could relate to personally".^[41] The shortcoming was underlined by his artistic rivalry with Marc Bolan, who was at the time acting as his session guitarist.^[41] The band Bowie assembled comprised John Cambridge, a drummer Bowie met at the Arts Lab, Tony Visconti on bass and Mick Ronson on electric guitar. Known as the Hype, the bandmates created characters for themselves and wore elaborate costumes that prefigured the glam style of the Spiders from Mars. After a disastrous opening gig at the London Roundhouse, they reverted to a configuration presenting Bowie as a solo artist.^{[41][42]} Their initial studio work was marred by a heated disagreement between Bowie and Cambridge over the latter's drumming style. Matters came to a head when an enraged Bowie accused the drummer of the disturbance, exclaiming "You're fucking up my album." Cambridge left and was replaced by Mick Woodmansey.^[43] Not long after, the singer fired his manager and replaced him with Tony Defries. This resulted in years of litigation that concluded with Bowie having to pay Pitt compensation.^[43]

The studio sessions continued and resulted in Bowie's third album, *The Man Who Sold the World* (1970), which contained references to schizophrenia, paranoia, and delusion.^[44] Characterised by the heavy rock sound of his new backing band, it was a marked departure from the acoustic guitar and folk rock style established by *Space Oddity*. To promote it in the US, Mercury Records financed a coast-to-coast publicity tour across America in which Bowie, between January and February 1971, was interviewed by radio stations and the media. Exploiting his androgynous appearance, the original cover of the UK version unveiled two months later depicted the singer wearing a dress: taking the garment with him, he wore it during interviews—to the approval of critics, including *Rolling Stone's* John Mendelsohn who described him as "ravishing, almost disconcertingly reminiscent of Lauren Bacall" – and in the street, to mixed reaction including laughter and, in the case of one male pedestrian, producing a gun and telling Bowie to "kiss my ass".^{[45][46]}

During the tour, Bowie's observation of two seminal American proto-punk artists led him to develop a concept that eventually found form in the Ziggy Stardust character: a melding of the persona of Iggy Pop with the music of Lou Reed, producing "the ultimate pop idol".^[45] A girlfriend recalled his "scrawling notes on a cocktail napkin about a crazy rock star named Iggy or Ziggy", and on his return to England he declared his intention to create a character "who looks like he's landed from Mars".^[45] The "Stardust" surname was a tribute to the "Legendary Stardust Cowboy", whose record he was given during the tour. Bowie would later cover "I Took a Trip on a Gemini Space Ship" on 2002's *Heathen*.^[47]

Hunky Dory (1971) found Visconti, Bowie's producer and bassist, supplanted in both roles by Ken Scott and Trevor Bolder respectively. The album saw the partial return of the fey pop singer of "Space Oddity", with light fare such as "Kooks", a song written for his son, Duncan Zowie Haywood Jones, born on 30 May.^[48] (His parents chose "his kooky name"—he was known as Zowie for the next 12 years—after the Greek word *zoe*, life.)^[49] Elsewhere, the album explored more serious subjects, and found Bowie paying unusually direct homage to his influences with "Song for Bob Dylan", "Andy Warhol", and "Queen Bitch", a Velvet Underground pastiche. It was not a significant commercial success at the time.^[50]

1972–1974: Ziggy Stardust



Bowie during the Ziggy Stardust Tour from 1972–73

Dressed in a striking costume, his hair dyed reddish-brown, Bowie launched his Ziggy Stardust stage show with the Spiders from Mars—Ronson, Bolder, and Woodmansey—at the Toby Jug pub in Tolworth on 10 February 1972.^[51] The show was hugely popular, catapulting him to stardom as he toured the UK over the next six months and creating, as described by Buckley, a "cult of Bowie" that was "unique—its influence lasted longer and has been more creative than perhaps almost any other force within pop fandom."^[51] *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* (1972), combining the hard rock elements of *The Man Who Sold the World* with the lighter experimental rock and pop of *Hunky Dory*, was released in June. "Starman", issued as an April single ahead of the album, was to cement Bowie's UK breakthrough: both single and album charted rapidly following his July *Top of the Pops* performance of the song. The album, which remained in the chart for two years, was soon joined there by the 6-month-old *Hunky Dory*. At the same time the non-album single "John, I'm Only Dancing", and "All the Young Dudes", a song he wrote and produced for Mott the Hoople, were successful in the UK. The Ziggy Stardust Tour continued to the United States.^[52]

Bowie contributed backing vocals, keyboards, and guitar to Reed's 1972 solo breakthrough *Transformer*, co-producing the album with Mick Ronson.^[53] The following year, Bowie co-produced and mixed The Stooges album *Raw Power* alongside Iggy Pop.^[54] His own *Aladdin Sane* (1973) topped the UK chart, his first number-one album. Described by Bowie as "Ziggy goes to America", it contained songs he wrote while travelling to and across the US during the earlier part of the Ziggy tour, which now continued to Japan to promote the new album. *Aladdin Sane* spawned the UK top five singles "The Jean Genie" and "Drive-In Saturday".^{[55][56]}

Bowie's love of acting led his total immersion in the characters he created for his music. "Offstage I'm a robot. Onstage I achieve emotion. It's probably why I prefer dressing up as Ziggy to being David." With satisfaction came severe personal difficulties: acting the same role over an extended period, it became impossible for him to separate Ziggy Stardust—and, later, the Thin White Duke—from his own character offstage. Ziggy, Bowie said, "wouldn't leave me alone for years. That was when it all started to go sour ... My whole personality was affected. It became very dangerous. I really did have doubts about my sanity."^[57] His later Ziggy shows, which included songs from both *Ziggy Stardust* and *Aladdin Sane*, were ultra-theatrical affairs filled with shocking stage moments, such as Bowie stripping down to a sumo wrestling loincloth or simulating oral sex with Ronson's guitar.^[58] Bowie toured and gave press conferences as Ziggy before a dramatic and abrupt on-stage "retirement" at London's Hammersmith Odeon on 3 July 1973. Footage from the final show was released the same year for the film *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*.^[59]

"Ziggy Stardust"

MENU

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Sample of "Ziggy Stardust" (1972). A pioneer of glam rock, Bowie performed as the character Ziggy Stardust, backed by the Spiders from Mars.

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After breaking up the Spiders from Mars, Bowie attempted to move on from his Ziggy persona. His back catalogue was now highly sought after: *The Man Who Sold the World* had been re-released in 1972 along with *Space Oddity*. "Life on Mars?", from *Hunky Dory*, was released in June 1973 and peaked at No. 3 on

the UK Singles Chart. Entering the same chart in September, Bowie's novelty record from 1967, "The Laughing Gnome", reached No. 6.^[60] *Pin Ups*, a collection of covers of his 1960s favourites, followed in October, producing a UK No. 3 hit in his version of the McCoys's "Sorrow" and itself peaking at number one, making David Bowie the best-selling act of 1973 in the UK. It brought the total number of Bowie albums concurrently on the UK chart to six.^[61]

1974–1976: "Plastic soul" and the Thin White Duke



Bowie filming a video for "Rebel Rebel" in 1974

Bowie moved to the US in 1974, initially staying in New York City before settling in Los Angeles.^[62] *Diamond Dogs* (1974), parts of which found him heading towards soul and funk, was the product of two distinct ideas: a musical based on a wild future in a post-apocalyptic city, and setting George Orwell's *1984* to music.^[63] The album went to number one in the UK, spawning the hits "Rebel Rebel" and "Diamond Dogs", and No. 5 in the US. To promote it, Bowie launched the Diamond Dogs Tour, visiting cities in North America between June and December 1974. Choreographed by Toni Basil, and lavishly produced with theatrical special effects, the high-budget stage production was filmed by Alan Yentob. The resulting documentary, *Cracked Actor*, featured a pasty and emaciated Bowie: the tour coincided with the singer's slide from heavy cocaine use into addiction, producing severe physical debilitation, paranoia, and emotional problems.^[64] He later commented that the accompanying live album, *David Live*, ought to have been titled "David Bowie Is Alive and Well and Living Only in Theory". *David Live* nevertheless solidified Bowie's status as a superstar, charting at No. 2 in the UK and No. 8 in the US. It also spawned a UK No. 10 hit in Bowie's cover of Eddie Floyd's "Knock on Wood". After a break in Philadelphia, where Bowie recorded new material, the tour resumed with a new emphasis on soul.^[65]



Bowie performing during Diamond Dogs Tour, 1974

The fruit of the Philadelphia recording sessions was *Young Americans* (1975). Biographer Christopher Sandford writes, "Over the years, most British rockers had tried, one way or another, to become black-by-extension. Few had succeeded as Bowie did now."^[66] The album's sound, which the singer identified as "plastic soul", constituted a radical shift in style that initially alienated many of his UK devotees.^[67] *Young Americans* yielded Bowie's first US number one, "Fame", co-written with John Lennon, who contributed backing vocals, and Carlos Alomar. Lennon called Bowie's work "great, but it's just rock'n'roll with lipstick on".^[68] Earning the distinction of being one of the first white artists to appear on the US variety show *Soul Train*, Bowie mimed "Fame", as well as "Golden Years", his November single,^[69] which was originally offered to Elvis Presley, who declined it.^[69] *Young Americans* was a commercial success in both the US and the UK, and a re-issue of the 1969 single "Space Oddity" became Bowie's first number-one hit in the UK a few months after "Fame" achieved the same in the US.^[70] Despite his by now well established superstardom, Bowie, in the words of Sandford, "for all his record sales (over a million copies of *Ziggy Stardust* alone), existed essentially on loose change."^[71] In 1975, in a move echoing Ken Pitt's acrimonious dismissal five years earlier, Bowie fired his manager. At the culmination of the ensuing months-long legal dispute, he watched, as described by Sandford, "millions of dollars of his future earnings being surrendered" in what were "uniquely generous terms for Defries", then "shut himself up in West 20th Street, where for a week his howls could be heard through the locked attic door."^[71] Michael Lippman, Bowie's lawyer during the negotiations, became his new manager; Lippman in turn was awarded substantial compensation when Bowie fired him the following year.^[72]



Bowie performing with Cher on the variety show *Cher*, 1975

Station to Station (1976), produced by Bowie and Harry Maslin,^[73] introduced a new Bowie persona, "The Thin White Duke" of its title-track. Visually, the character was an extension of Thomas Jerome Newton, the extraterrestrial being he portrayed in the film *The Man Who Fell to Earth* the same year.^[74] Developing the funk and soul of *Young Americans*, *Station to Station's* synthesizer-heavy arrangements prefigured the krautrock-influenced music of his next releases. The extent to which drug addiction was now affecting Bowie was made public when Russell Harty interviewed the singer for his London Weekend Television talk show in anticipation of the album's supporting tour. Shortly before the satellite-linked interview was scheduled to commence, the death of the Spanish dictator Francisco Franco was announced. Bowie was asked to relinquish the satellite booking, to allow the Spanish Government to put out a live newsfeed. This he refused to do, and his interview went ahead. In the ensuing lengthy conversation with Harty, Bowie was incoherent and looked "disconnected".^[75] His sanity—by his own later admission—had become twisted from cocaine; he overdosed several times during the year, and was withering physically to an alarming degree.^{[64][76]}

Station to Station's January 1976 release was followed in February by a 31/2-month-long concert tour of Europe and North America. Featuring a starkly lit set, the Isolar – 1976 Tour with its iconic colour newsprint Isolar concert program, highlighted songs from the album, including the dramatic and lengthy title track, the ballads "Wild Is the Wind" and "Word on a Wing", and the funkier "TVC 15" and "Stay". The core band that coalesced to record this album and tour—rhythm guitarist Carlos Alomar, bassist George Murray, and drummer Dennis Davis—continued as a stable unit for the remainder of the 1970s. The tour was highly successful but mired in political controversy. Bowie was quoted in Stockholm as saying that "Britain could benefit from a Fascist leader", and was detained by customs on the Russian/Polish border for possessing Nazi paraphernalia.^[77]



Bowie as the Thin White Duke at Maple Leaf Gardens, Toronto, 1976

Matters came to a head in London in May in what became known as the "Victoria Station incident". Arriving in an open-top Mercedes convertible, Bowie waved to the crowd in a gesture that some alleged was a Nazi salute, which was captured on camera and published in *NME*. Bowie said the photographer caught him in mid-wave.^[78] He later blamed his pro-fascism comments and his behaviour during the period on his addictions and the character of the Thin White Duke.^[79] "I was out of my mind, totally crazed. The main thing I was functioning on was mythology ... that whole thing about Hitler and Rightism ... I'd discovered King Arthur".^[76] According to playwright Alan Franks, writing later in *The Times*, "he was indeed 'deranged'. He had some very bad experiences with hard drugs."^[80] Bowie's cocaine addiction, which had motivated these controversies, had much to do with his time living in Los Angeles, a city which alienated him. Discussing his flirtations with fascism in a 1980 interview with *NME*, Bowie explained that Los Angeles was "where it had all happened. The fucking place should be wiped off the face of the Earth. To be anything to do with rock and roll and go and live in Los Angeles is, I think, just heading for disaster. It really is."^[81]

After recovering from addiction, Bowie apologised for these statements, and throughout the 1980s and '90s criticised racism in European politics and the American music industry.^[82] Nevertheless, Bowie's comments on fascism, as well as Eric Clapton's alcohol-fuelled denunciations of Pakistani immigrants in 1976, led to the establishment of Rock Against Racism.^[83]

1976–1979: Berlin era

Main article: Berlin Trilogy

Bowie moved to Switzerland in 1976, purchasing a chalet in the hills to the north of Lake Geneva. In the new environment, his cocaine use decreased and he found time for other pursuits outside his musical career.^[84] He devoted more time to his painting, and produced a number of post-modernist pieces. When on tour, he took to sketching in a notebook, and photographing scenes for later reference. Visiting galleries in Geneva and the Brücke Museum in Berlin, Bowie became, in the words of biographer Christopher Sandford, "a prolific producer and collector of contemporary art. ... Not only did he become a well-known patron of expressionist art: locked in Clos des Mésanges he began an intensive self-improvement course in classical music and literature, and started work on an autobiography."^[85]



Apartment building at 155, Hauptstraße, Schöneberg, Berlin, where Bowie lived from 1976 to 1978

Before the end of 1976, Bowie's interest in the burgeoning German music scene, as well as his drug addiction, prompted him to move to West Berlin to clean up and revitalise his career. There he was often seen riding a bicycle between his apartment on Hauptstraße in Schöneberg and Hansa Tonstudio, the recording studio he used, located on Köthener Straße in Kreuzberg, near the Berlin Wall.^[86] While working with Brian Eno and sharing an apartment with Iggy Pop, he began to focus on minimalist, ambient music for the first of three albums, co-produced with Tony Visconti, that became known as his Berlin Trilogy.^[87] During the same period, Iggy Pop, with Bowie as a co-writer and musician, completed his solo album debut *The Idiot* and its follow-up *Lust for Life*, touring the UK, Europe, and the US in March and April 1977.^[88]



Bowie performing in Oslo, Norway, 1978

The album *Low* (1977), partly influenced by the Krautrock sound of Kraftwerk and Neu!, evinced a move away from narration in Bowie's songwriting to a more abstract musical form in which lyrics were sporadic and optional. Although he completed the album in November 1976, it took his unsettled record company another three months to release it.^[86] It received considerable negative criticism upon its release—a release which RCA, anxious to maintain the established commercial momentum, did not welcome, and which Bowie's former manager, Tony Defries, who still maintained a significant financial interest in the singer's affairs, tried to prevent. Despite these forebodings, *Low* yielded the UK No. 3 single "Sound and Vision", and its own performance surpassed that of *Station to Station* in the UK chart, where it reached No. 2. Leading contemporary composer Philip Glass described *Low* as "a work of genius" in 1992, when he used it as the basis for his *Symphony No. 1 "Low"*; subsequently, Glass used Bowie's next album as the basis for his 1996 *Symphony No. 4 "Heroes"*.^{[89][90]} Glass has praised Bowie's gift for creating "fairly complex pieces of music, masquerading as simple pieces".^[91] Also in 1977, London released *Starting Point*, a ten-song LP containing releases from Bowie's Deram period (1966–67).^[92]

"Heroes"

"

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Sample of "Heroes" (1977). One of the ambient rock songs to emerge from Bowie's Berlin Trilogy era, "Heroes" gained lasting popularity.

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Echoing *Low*'s minimalist, instrumental approach, the second of the trilogy, "*Heroes*" (1977), incorporated pop and rock to a greater extent, seeing Bowie joined by guitarist Robert Fripp. Like *Low*, "*Heroes*" evinced the zeitgeist of the Cold War, symbolised by the divided city of Berlin.^[93] Incorporating ambient sounds from a variety of sources including white noise generators, synthesisers and koto, the album was another hit, reaching No. 3 in the UK. Its title-track, though only reaching No. 24 in the UK singles chart, gained lasting popularity, and within months had been released in both German and French.^[94] Towards the end of the year, Bowie performed the song for Marc Bolan's television show *Marc*, and again two days later for Bing Crosby's final CBS television Christmas special, when

he joined Crosby in "Peace on Earth/Little Drummer Boy", a version of "The Little Drummer Boy" with a new, contrapuntal verse. Five years later, the duet proved a worldwide seasonal hit, charting in the UK at No. 3 on Christmas Day, 1982.^[95]

After completing *Low* and "*Heroes*", Bowie spent much of 1978 on the Isolar II world tour, bringing the music of the first two Berlin Trilogy albums to almost a million people during 70 concerts in 12 countries. By now he had broken his drug addiction; biographer David Buckley writes that Isolar II was "Bowie's first tour for five years in which he had probably not anaesthetised himself with copious quantities of cocaine before taking the stage. ... Without the oblivion that drugs had brought, he was now in a healthy enough mental condition to want to make friends."^[96] Recordings from the tour made up the live album *Stage*, released the same year.^[97]

The final piece in what Bowie called his "trilogy", *Lodger* (1979), eschewed the minimalist, ambient nature of the other two, making a partial return to the drum- and guitar-based rock and pop of his pre-Berlin era. The result was a complex mixture of new wave and world music, in places incorporating Hijaz non-Western scales. Some tracks were composed using Eno and Peter Schmidt's Oblique Strategies cards: "Boys Keep Swinging" entailed band members swapping instruments, "Move On" used the chords from Bowie's early composition "All the Young Dudes" played backwards, and "Red Money" took backing tracks from "Sister Midnight", a piece previously composed with Iggy Pop.^[98] The album was recorded in Switzerland. Ahead of its release, RCA's Mel Ilberman stated, "It would be fair to call it Bowie's *Sergeant Pepper* ... a concept album that portrays the Lodger as a homeless wanderer, shunned and victimized by life's pressures and technology." As described by biographer Christopher Sandford, "The record dashed such high hopes with dubious choices, and production that spelt the end—for fifteen years—of Bowie's partnership with Eno." *Lodger* reached No. 4 in the UK and No. 20 in the US, and yielded the UK hit singles "Boys Keep Swinging" and "DJ".^{[99][100]} Towards the end of the year, Bowie and Angie initiated divorce proceedings, and after months of court battles the marriage was ended in early 1980.^[101]

1980–1988: New Romantic and pop era



Serious Moonlight Tour, 1983

Scary Monsters and Super Creeps (1980) produced the number-one hit "Ashes to Ashes", featuring the textural work of guitar-synthesist Chuck Hammer and revisiting the character of Major Tom from "Space Oddity". The song gave international exposure to the underground New Romantic movement when Bowie visited the London club "Blitz"—the main New Romantic hangout—to recruit several of the regulars (including Steve Strange of the band Visage) to act in the accompanying video, renowned as one of the most innovative of all time.^[102] While *Scary Monsters* used principles established by the Berlin albums, it was considered by critics to be far more direct musically and lyrically. The album's hard rock edge included conspicuous guitar contributions from Robert Fripp, Chuck Hammer, and Pete Townshend.^[103] As "Ashes to Ashes" hit number one on the UK charts, Bowie opened a three-month run on Broadway on 24 September, starring as John Merrick in *The Elephant Man*.^[104]

Bowie paired with Queen in 1981 for a one-off single release, "Under Pressure". The duet was a hit, becoming Bowie's third UK number-one single. Bowie was given the lead role in the BBC's 1982 televised adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's play *Baal*. Coinciding with its transmission, a five-track EP of songs from the play, recorded earlier in Berlin, was released as *David Bowie in Bertolt Brecht's Baal*. In March 1982, the month before Paul Schrader's film *Cat People* came out, Bowie's title song, "Cat People (Putting Out Fire)", was released as a single, becoming a minor US hit and entering the UK Top 30.^[105]

Bowie reached his peak of popularity and commercial success in 1983 with *Let's Dance*.^[106] Co-produced by Chic's Nile Rodgers, the album went platinum in both the UK and the US. Its three singles became Top 20 hits in both countries, where its title track reached number one. "Modern Love" and "China Girl" each made No. 2 in the UK, accompanied by a pair of "absorbing" promotional videos that biographer David Buckley said "activated key archetypes in the pop world. 'Let's Dance', with its little narrative surrounding the young Aborigine couple, targeted 'youth', and 'China Girl', with its bare-bummed (and later partially censored) beach lovemaking scene (a homage to the film *From Here to Eternity*), was sufficiently sexually provocative to guarantee heavy rotation on MTV".^[107] Stevie Ray Vaughan was guest guitarist playing solo on "Let's Dance", although the video depicts Bowie miming this part.^[108] By 1983, Bowie had emerged as one of the most important video artists of the day. *Let's Dance* was followed by the Serious Moonlight Tour, during which Bowie was accompanied by guitarist Earl

Slick and backing vocalists Frank and George Simms. The world tour lasted six months and was extremely popular.^[109] At the 1984 MTV Video Music Awards Bowie received two awards including the inaugural Video Vanguard Award.^[110]



Bowie performing during the Glass Spider Tour, 1987

Tonight (1984), another dance-oriented album, found Bowie collaborating with Tina Turner and, once again, Iggy Pop. It included a number of cover songs, among them the 1966 Beach Boys hit "God Only Knows". The album bore the transatlantic Top 10 hit "Blue Jean", itself the inspiration for a short film that won Bowie a Grammy Award for Best Short Form Music Video, *Jazzin' for Blue Jean*. Bowie performed at Wembley Stadium in 1985 for Live Aid, a multi-venue benefit concert for Ethiopian famine relief.^[111] During the event, the video for a fundraising single was premiered, Bowie's duet with Mick Jagger. "Dancing in the Street" quickly went to number one on release. The same year, Bowie worked with the Pat Metheny Group to record "This Is Not America" for the soundtrack of *The Falcon and the Snowman*. Released as a single, the song became a Top 40 hit in the UK and US.^[112]

Bowie was given a role in the 1986 film *Absolute Beginners*. It was poorly received by critics, but Bowie's theme song, also named "Absolute Beginners", rose to No. 2 in the UK charts. He also appeared as Jareth, the Goblin King, in the 1986 Jim Henson film *Labyrinth*, for which he wrote five songs. His final solo album of the decade was 1987's *Never Let Me Down*, where he ditched the light sound of his previous two albums, instead offering harder rock with an industrial/techno dance edge. Peaking at No. 6 in the UK, the album yielded the hits "Day-In, Day-Out" (his 60th single), "Time Will Crawl", and "Never Let Me Down". Bowie later described it as his "nadir", calling it "an awful album".^[113] Supporting *Never Let Me Down*, and preceded by nine promotional press shows, the 86-concert Glass Spider Tour commenced on 30 May. Bowie's backing band included Peter Frampton on lead guitar. Contemporary critics maligned the tour as overproduced, saying it pandered to the current stadium rock trends in its special effects and dancing,^[114] although years after the tour's conclusion, critics acknowledged that the tour influenced how other artists performed concerts, including Britney Spears, Madonna, and U2.^{[115][116]}

1989–1991: Tin Machine

Main article: Tin Machine

Bowie shelved his solo career in 1989, retreating to the relative anonymity of band membership for the first time since the early 1970s. A hard-rocking quartet, Tin Machine came into being after Bowie began to work experimentally with guitarist Reeves Gabrels. The line-up was completed by Tony and Hunt Sales, whom Bowie had known since the late 1970s for their contribution, on bass and drums respectively, to Iggy Pop's 1977 album *Lust for Life*.^[117]



Bowie in Chile during the Sound+Vision Tour, 1990

Although he intended Tin Machine to operate as a democracy, Bowie dominated, both in songwriting and in decision-making.^[118] The band's album debut, *Tin Machine* (1989), was initially popular, though its politicised lyrics did not find universal approval: Bowie described one song as "a simplistic, naive, radical, laying-it-down about the emergence of Neo-Nazis"; in the view of biographer Christopher Sandford, "It took nerve to denounce drugs, fascism and TV ... in terms that reached the literary level of a comic book."^[119] EMI complained of "lyrics that preach" as well as "repetitive tunes" and "minimalist or no production".^[120] The album nevertheless reached No. 3 and went gold in the UK.^[119]

Tin Machine's first world tour was a commercial success, but there was growing reluctance—among fans and critics alike—to accept Bowie's presentation as merely a band member.^[121] A series of Tin Machine singles failed to chart, and Bowie, after a disagreement with EMI, left the label.^[122] Like his audience and his critics, Bowie himself became increasingly disaffected with his role as just one member of a band.^[123] Tin Machine began work on a second album, but Bowie put the venture on hold and made a return to solo work. Performing his early hits during the seven-month Sound+Vision Tour, he found commercial success and acclaim once again.^[124]

In October 1990, a decade after his divorce from Angie, Bowie and Somali-born supermodel Iman were introduced by a mutual friend. Bowie recalled, "I was naming the children the night we met ... it was absolutely immediate." They married in 1992.^[125] Tin Machine resumed work the same month, but their audience and critics, ultimately left disappointed by the first album, showed little interest in a second. *Tin Machine II*'s arrival was marked by a widely publicised and ill-timed conflict over the cover art: after production had begun, the new record label, Victory, deemed the depiction of four ancient nude Kouros statues, judged by Bowie to be "in exquisite taste", "a show of wrong, obscene images", requiring air-brushing and patching to render the figures sexless.^[126] Tin Machine toured again, but after the live album *Tin Machine Live: Oy Vey, Baby* failed commercially, the band drifted apart, and Bowie, though he continued to collaborate with Gabrels, resumed his solo career.^[127]

1992–1998: Electronic period

On 20 April 1992, Bowie appeared at The Freddie Mercury Tribute Concert, following the Queen singer's death the previous year. As well as performing "Heroes" and "All the Young Dudes", he was joined on "Under Pressure" by Annie Lennox, who took Mercury's vocal part; during his appearance, Bowie knelt and recited the Lord's Prayer at Wembley Stadium.^{[128][129]} Four days later, Bowie and Iman were married in Switzerland. Intending to move to Los Angeles, they flew in to search for a suitable property, but found themselves confined to their hotel, under curfew: the 1992 Los Angeles riots began the day they arrived. They settled in New York instead.^[130]



Bowie performing in Turku, Finland, 1997

In 1993, Bowie released his first solo offering since his Tin Machine departure, the soul, jazz, and hip-hop influenced *Black Tie White Noise*. Making prominent use of electronic instruments, the album, which reunited Bowie with *Let's Dance* producer Nile Rodgers, confirmed Bowie's return to popularity, hitting the number-one spot on the UK charts and spawning three Top 40 hits, including the Top 10 single "Jump They Say".^[131] Bowie explored new directions on *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1993), ostensibly a soundtrack album of his music composed for the BBC television adaptation of Hanif Kureishi's novel. Only the title track had been used in the television adaptation, although some of his themes for it were also present on the album.^[132] It contained some of the new elements introduced in *Black Tie White Noise*, and also signalled a move towards alternative rock. The album was a critical success but received a low-key release and only made No. 87 in the UK charts.^[133]

Reuniting Bowie with Eno, the quasi-industrial *Outside* (1995) was originally conceived as the first volume in a non-linear narrative of art and murder. Featuring characters from a short story written by Bowie, the album achieved UK and US chart success, and yielded three Top 40 UK singles.^[134] In a move that provoked mixed reaction from both fans and critics, Bowie chose Nine Inch Nails as his tour partner for the Outside Tour. Visiting cities in Europe and North America between September 1995 and February 1996, the tour saw the return of Gabrels as Bowie's guitarist.^[135] On 7 January 1997, Bowie celebrated his half century with a 50th birthday concert at Madison Square Garden, New York, at which he was joined in playing his songs and those of his guests, Lou Reed, Dave Grohl and the Foo Fighters, Robert Smith of the Cure, Billy Corgan of the Smashing Pumpkins, Black Francis of the Pixies, and Sonic Youth.^[136]

Bowie was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on 17 January 1996.^[137] Incorporating experiments in British jungle and drum 'n' bass, *Earthling* (1997) was a critical and commercial success in the UK and the US, and two singles from the album – "Little Wonder" and "Dead Man Walking" – became UK Top 40 hits. Bowie's song "I'm Afraid of Americans" from the Paul Verhoeven film *Showgirls* was re-recorded for the album, and remixed by Trent Reznor for a single release. The heavy rotation of the accompanying video, also featuring Trent Reznor, contributed to the song's 16-week stay in the US *Billboard* Hot 100. Bowie received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on 12 February 1997.^[138] The Earthling Tour took in Europe and North America between June and November 1997.^[139] In November 1997, Bowie performed on the BBC's Children in Need charity single "Perfect Day", which reached number one in the UK.^[140] Bowie reunited with Visconti in 1998 to record "(Safe in This) Sky Life" for *The Rugrats Movie*. Although the track was edited out of the final cut, it was later re-recorded and released as "Safe" on the B-side of Bowie's 2002 single "Everyone Says 'Hi'".^[141] The reunion led to other collaborations including a limited-edition single release version of Placebo's track "Without You I'm Nothing", co-produced by Visconti, with Bowie's harmonised vocal added to the original recording.^[142]

Bowie Bonds

Bowie Bonds, an early example of celebrity bonds, were asset-backed securities of current and future revenues of the 25 albums (287 songs) that Bowie recorded before 1990. Bowie Bonds were pioneered by rock and roll investment banker David Pullman.^[143] Issued in 1997, the bonds were bought for US\$55 million by the Prudential Insurance Company of America.^{[144][145]} The bonds paid an interest rate of 7.9% and had an average life of ten years,^[146] a higher rate of return than a 10-year Treasury note (at the time, 6.37%).^[145] Royalties from the 25 albums generated the cash flow that secured the bonds' interest payments.^[147] Prudential also received guarantees from Bowie's label, EMI Records, which had recently signed a \$30m deal with Bowie.^[145] By forfeiting ten years worth of royalties, Bowie received a payment of US\$55 million up front. Bowie used this income to buy songs owned by his former manager.^[146] Bowie's combined catalogue of albums covered by this agreement sold more than 1 million copies annually at the time of the agreement.^[145] By March 2004, Moody's Investors Service lowered the bonds from an A3 rating (the seventh highest rating) to Baa3, one notch above junk status.^{[148][149]} The downgrade was prompted by lower-than-expected revenue "due to weakness in sales for recorded music" and that an unnamed company guaranteed the issue.^[150] Nonetheless, the bonds liquidated in 2007 as originally planned, without default, and the rights to the income from the songs reverted to Bowie.^[151]

BowieNet

In September 1998, Bowie launched an Internet service provider, BowieNet, developed in conjunction with Robert Goodale and Ron Roy.^{[152][153]} Subscribers to the dial-up service were offered exclusive content, as well as a BowieNet email address and Internet access.^[152] The service was closed by 2006.^[152]

1999–2012: Neoclassicist Bowie



Bowie on stage with Sterling Campbell during the Heathen Tour, 2002

Bowie, with Reeves Gabrels, created the soundtrack for *Omikron: The Nomad Soul*, a 1999 computer game in which he and Iman also voiced characters based on their likenesses. Released the same year and containing re-recorded tracks from *Omikron*, his album *Hours* featured a song with lyrics by the winner of his "Cyber Song Contest" Internet competition, Alex Grant.^[154] Making extensive use of live instruments, the album was Bowie's exit from heavy electronica.^[155] Sessions for the planned album *Toy*, intended to feature new versions of some of Bowie's earliest pieces as well as three new songs, commenced in 2000, but the album was never released. Bowie and Visconti continued their collaboration, producing a new album of completely original songs instead: the result of the sessions was the 2002 album *Heathen*.^[156]

On 25 June 2000, Bowie made his second appearance at the Glastonbury Festival in England, playing 30 years after his first.^[157] On 27 June, Bowie performed a concert at BBC Radio Theatre in London, which was released in the compilation album *Bowie at the Beeb*, which also featured BBC recording sessions from 1968 to 1972.^[158] Bowie and Iman's daughter was born on 15 August.^[159]

In October 2001, Bowie opened the Concert for New York City, a charity event to benefit the victims of the September 11 attacks, with a minimalist performance of Simon & Garfunkel's "America", followed by a full band performance of "Heroes".^[160] 2002 saw the release of *Heathen*, and, during the second half of the year, the Heathen Tour. Taking place in Europe and North America, the tour opened at London's annual *Meltdown* festival, for which Bowie was that year appointed artistic director. Among the acts he selected for the festival were Philip Glass, Television, and the Dandy Warhols. As well as songs from the new album, the tour featured material from Bowie's *Low* era.^[161] *Reality* (2003) followed, and its accompanying world tour, the A Reality Tour, with an estimated attendance of 722,000, grossed more than any other in 2004. Onstage in Oslo, Norway, on 18 June, Bowie was hit in the eye with a lollipop thrown by a fan; a week later he suffered chest pain while performing at the Hurricane Festival in Scheeßel, Germany. Originally thought to be a pinched nerve in his shoulder, the pain was later diagnosed as an acutely blocked coronary artery, requiring an emergency angioplasty in Hamburg. The remaining 14 dates of the tour were cancelled.^[162] That same year, his interest in Buddhism led him to support the Tibetan cause by performing at a concert to support the New York Tibet House.^[163]



Bowie with his son Duncan Jones at the premiere of Jones's directorial debut *Moon*, 2009

In the years following his recuperation from the heart attack, Bowie reduced his musical output, making only one-off appearances on stage and in the studio. He sang in a duet of his 1971 song "Changes" with Butterfly Boucher for the 2004 animated film *Shrek 2*.^[164]

During a relatively quiet 2005, he recorded the vocals for the song "(She Can) Do That", co-written with Brian Transeau, for the film *Stealth*.^[165] He returned to the stage on 8 September 2005, appearing with Arcade Fire for the US nationally televised event Fashion Rocks, and performed with the Canadian band for the second time a week later during the CMJ Music Marathon.^[166] He contributed backing vocals on TV on the Radio's song "Province" for their album *Return to Cookie Mountain*,^[167] made a commercial with Snoop Dogg for XM Satellite Radio^[168] and joined with Lou Reed on Danish alt-rockers Kashmir's 2005 album *No Balance Palace*.^[169]

Bowie was awarded the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award on 8 February 2006.^[170] In April, he announced, "I'm taking a year off—no touring, no albums."^[171] He made a surprise guest appearance at David Gilmour's 29 May concert at the Royal Albert Hall in London. The event was recorded, and a selection of songs on which he had contributed joint vocals were subsequently released.^[172] He performed again in November, alongside Alicia Keys, at the Black Ball, a benefit event for Keep a Child Alive at the Hammerstein Ballroom in New York.^{[173][174]} The performance marked the last time Bowie performed his music on stage.^[175]

Bowie was chosen to curate the 2007 High Line Festival, selecting musicians and artists for the Manhattan event, including electronic pop duo AIR, surrealist photographer Claude Cahun, and English comedian Ricky Gervais.^{[176][177]} Bowie performed on Scarlett Johansson's 2008 album of Tom Waits covers, *Anywhere I Lay My Head*.^[178] On the 40th anniversary of the July 1969 moon landing—and Bowie's accompanying commercial breakthrough with "Space Oddity"—EMI

released the individual tracks from the original eight-track studio recording of the song, in a 2009 contest inviting members of the public to create a remix.^[179] *A Reality Tour*, a double album of live material from the 2003 concert tour, was released in January 2010.^[180]

In late March 2011, *Toy*, Bowie's previously unreleased album from 2001, was leaked onto the internet, containing material used for *Heathen* and most of its single B-sides, as well as unheard new versions of his early back catalogue.^{[181][182]}

2013–2016: Final years

On 8 January 2013, his 66th birthday, his website announced a new album, to be titled *The Next Day* and scheduled for release 8 March for Australia, 12 March for the United States, and 11 March for the rest of the world.^[183] Bowie's first studio album in a decade, *The Next Day* contains 14 songs plus 3 bonus tracks.^{[184][185]} His website acknowledged the length of his hiatus.^[186] Record producer Tony Visconti said 29 tracks were recorded for the album, some of which could appear on Bowie's next record, which he might start work on later in 2013. The announcement was accompanied by the immediate release of a single, "Where Are We Now?", written and recorded by Bowie in New York and produced by longtime collaborator Visconti.^[186]

A music video for "Where Are We Now?" was released onto Vimeo the same day, directed by New York artist Tony Oursler.^[186] The single topped the UK iTunes Chart within hours of its release,^[187] and debuted in the UK Singles Chart at No. 6,^[188] his first single to enter the Top 10 for two decades (since "Jump They Say" in 1993). A second video, "The Stars (Are Out Tonight)", was released 25 February. Directed by Floria Sigismondi, it stars Bowie and Tilda Swinton as a married couple.^[189] On 1 March, the album was made available to stream for free through iTunes.^[190] *The Next Day* debuted at No. 1 on the UK Albums Chart, was his first album to achieve that position since *Black Tie White Noise* (1993), and was the fastest-selling album of 2013 at the time.^[191] The music video for the song "The Next Day" created some controversy, initially being removed from YouTube for terms-of-service violation, then restored with a warning recommending viewing only by those 18 or over.^[192]

According to *The Times*, Bowie ruled out ever giving an interview again.^[193] An exhibition of Bowie artefacts, called *David Bowie Is*, was organised by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and shown there in 2013.^[194] The London exhibit was visited by 311,956 people, making it one of the most successful exhibitions ever staged at the museum.^[195] Later that year the exhibition began a world tour which started in Toronto and included stops in Chicago, Paris, Melbourne, Groningen and Brooklyn, New York where the exhibit ended on 15 July at the Brooklyn Museum.^[196] Bowie was featured in a cameo vocal in the Arcade Fire song "Reflektor".^[197] A poll carried out by BBC History Magazine, in October 2013, named Bowie as the best-dressed Briton in history.^[198]

At the 2014 Brit Awards on 19 February, Bowie became the oldest recipient of a Brit Award in the ceremony's history when he won the award for Best British Male, which was collected on his behalf by Kate Moss. His speech read: "I'm completely delighted to have a Brit for being the best male – but I am, aren't I Kate? Yes. I think it's a great way to end the day. Thank you very, very much and Scotland stay with us."^[199] Bowie's reference to the forthcoming September 2014 Scottish independence referendum garnered a significant reaction throughout the UK on social media.^{[200][201]} On 18 July, Bowie indicated that future music would be forthcoming, though he was vague about details.^[202]

New information was released in September 2014 regarding his next compilation album, *Nothing Has Changed*, which was released in November. The album featured rare tracks and old material from his catalogue in addition to a new song titled "Sue (Or in a Season of Crime)".^[203] In May 2015, "Let's Dance" was announced to be reissued as a yellow vinyl single on 16 July 2015 in conjunction with the *David Bowie Is* exhibition at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image in Melbourne, Australia.^[204]



Advertisement for the *David Bowie Is* exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum in New York City, at Broadway-Lafayette St. Station. April 2018

In August 2015, it was announced that Bowie was writing songs for a Broadway musical based on the *SpongeBob SquarePants* cartoon series.^[205] Bowie wrote and recorded the opening title song to the television series *The Last Panthers*, which aired in November 2015.^[206] The theme that was used for *The Last Panthers* was also the title track for his January 2016 release *Blackstar* which is said to take cues from his earlier krautrock influenced work.^[207] According to *The Times*: "*Blackstar* may be the oddest work yet from Bowie".^[208] On 7 December 2015, Bowie's musical *Lazarus* debuted in New York. His last public appearance was at opening night of the production.^[209]

Blackstar was released on 8 January 2016, Bowie's 69th birthday, and was met with critical acclaim.^[210] Following his death on 10 January, producer Tony Visconti revealed that Bowie had planned the album to be his swan song, and a "parting gift" for his fans before his death.^{[211][212][213]} Several reporters and critics subsequently noted that most of the lyrics on the album seem to revolve around his impending death,^{[214][215]} with CNN noting that the album "reveals a man who appears to be grappling with his own mortality".^[214] Visconti later said that Bowie had been planning a post-*Blackstar* album, and had written and recorded demo versions of five songs in his final weeks, suggesting that Bowie believed he had a few months left.^[216] The day following his death, online viewing of Bowie's music skyrocketed, breaking the record for Vevo's most viewed artist in a single day.^[217] On 15 January, *Blackstar* debuted at number one on the UK Albums Chart; nineteen of his albums were in the UK Top 100 Albums Chart, and thirteen singles were in the UK Top 100 Singles Chart.^{[218][219]} *Blackstar* also debuted at number one on album charts around the world, including Australia, France, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, and the US *Billboard* 200.^{[220][221]}

As of 11 January 2016, more than 1.3 million people had visited the *David Bowie Is* exhibit, making it the most successful exhibition ever staged by the Victoria and Albert Museum in terms of worldwide attendance.^{[222][223]} The museum stated that the exhibition would continue to tour, with confirmed travel to Japan in 2017.^[222] At the 59th Annual Grammy Awards, Bowie won all five nominated awards: Best Rock Performance; Best Alternative Music Album; Best Engineered Album, Non-Classical; Best Recording Package; and Best Rock Song. The wins marked Bowie's first ever in musical categories.^[224]

An EP, *No Plan*, was released on 8 January 2017, which would have been Bowie's 70th birthday.^[225] Apart from "Lazarus", the EP includes three songs that Bowie had recorded during the *Blackstar* sessions, but were left off the album and subsequently appeared on the soundtrack album for the *Lazarus* musical in October 2016.^[226] A music video for the title track was also released.^[226] Since January 2016, Bowie has sold 5 million units in the United Kingdom alone.^[227]

Acting career

The beginnings of Bowie's acting career predate his commercial breakthrough as a musician. Studying avant-garde theatre and mime under Lindsay Kemp, he was given the role of Cloud in Kemp's 1967 theatrical production *Pierrot in Turquoise* (later made into the 1970 television film *The Looking Glass Murders*).^[228] In the black-and-white short *The Image* (1969), he played a ghostly boy who emerges from a troubled artist's painting to haunt him.^[229] The same year, the film of Leslie Thomas's 1966 comic novel *The Virgin Soldiers* saw Bowie make a brief appearance as an extra.^[229] In 1976 he earned acclaim for his first major film role, portraying Thomas Jerome Newton, an alien from a dying planet, in *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, directed by Nicolas Roeg. *Just a Gigolo* (1979), an Anglo-German co-production directed by David Hemmings, saw Bowie in the lead role as Prussian officer Paul von Przygodski, who, returning from World War I, is discovered by a Baroness (Marlene Dietrich) and put into her Gigolo Stable.^[230]



Bowie's costume from *Labyrinth* at the Museum of Pop Culture, Seattle

Bowie played Joseph Merrick in the Broadway theatre production *The Elephant Man*, which he undertook wearing no stage make-up, and which earned high praise for his expressive performance. He played the part 157 times between 1980 and 1981.^[104] *Christiane F. – We Children from Bahnhof Zoo*, a 1981 biographical film focusing on a young girl's drug addiction in West Berlin, featured Bowie in a cameo appearance as himself at a concert in Germany. Its soundtrack album, *Christiane F.* (1981), featured much material from his Berlin Trilogy albums.^[231] Bowie starred in *The Hunger* (1983), with Catherine Deneuve and Susan Sarandon. In Nagisa Oshima's film the same year, *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*, based on Laurens van der Post's novel *The Seed and the Sower*, Bowie played Major Jack Celliers, a prisoner of war in a Japanese internment camp. Bowie had a cameo in *Yellowbeard*, a 1983 pirate comedy created by Monty Python members, and a small part as Colin, the hitman in the 1985 film *Into the Night*. He declined to play the villain Max Zorin in the James Bond film *A View to a Kill* (1985).^[232]

Absolute Beginners (1986), a rock musical film adapted from Colin MacInnes's book of the same name about life in late 1950s London, featured Bowie's music and presented him with a minor acting role. The same year, Jim Henson's dark fantasy *Labyrinth* found him with the part of Jareth, the king of the goblins.^[233] Two years later, he played Pontius Pilate in Martin Scorsese's 1988 film *The Last Temptation of Christ*. Bowie portrayed a disgruntled restaurant employee opposite Rosanna Arquette in *The Linguini Incident* (1991), and the mysterious FBI agent Phillip Jeffries in David Lynch's *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992). He took a small but pivotal role as Andy Warhol in *Basquiat*, artist/director Julian Schnabel's 1996 biopic of Jean-Michel Basquiat, and co-starred in Giovanni Veronesi's Spaghetti Western *Il Mio West* (1998, released as *Gunslinger's Revenge* in the US in 2005) as the most feared gunfighter in the region.^[234] He played the ageing gangster Bernie in Andrew Goth's *Everybody Loves Sunshine* (1999), and appeared in the television horror series of *The Hunger*. In *Mr. Rice's Secret* (2000), he played the title role as the neighbour of a terminally ill 12-year-old, and the following year appeared as himself in *Zoolander*.^[235]

Bowie portrayed physicist Nikola Tesla in Christopher Nolan's film *The Prestige* (2006), which was about the bitter rivalry between two magicians in the late 19th century. In the same year, he voice-acted in the animated film *Arthur and the Invisibles* as the powerful villain Maltazard and appeared as himself in an episode of the Ricky Gervais television series *Extras*. In 2007, he lent his voice to the character Lord Royal Highness in the *SpongeBob's Atlantis SquarePant* television film. In the 2008 film *August*, directed by Austin Chick, he played a supporting role as Ogilvie, alongside Josh Hartnett and Rip Torn, with whom he had worked in the 1976 film *The Man Who Fell to Earth*.^{[236][237]}

In a 2017 interview with *Consequence of Sound*, director Denis Villeneuve revealed his intention to cast Bowie in *Blade Runner 2049* as the lead villain, Niander Wallace, but when news broke of Bowie's death in January of the same year, Villeneuve was forced to look for talent with similar "rock star" qualities. He eventually cast actor and lead singer of Thirty Seconds to Mars, Jared Leto. Talking about the casting process, Villeneuve said: "Our first thought [for the character] had been David Bowie, who had influenced *Blade Runner* in many ways. When we learned the sad news, we looked around for someone like that. He [Bowie] embodied the Blade Runner spirit."^[238]

Legacy and influence



Bowie's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame



Berlin Memorial Plaque, Hauptstraße 155, in Schöneberg, Germany

Bowie's songs and stagecraft brought a new dimension to popular music in the early 1970s, strongly influencing both its immediate forms and its subsequent development. Bowie was a pioneer of glam rock, according to music historians Schinder and Schwartz, who credited Marc Bolan and Bowie with creating the genre.^[239] At the same time, he inspired the innovators of the punk rock music movement.^[240] When punk musicians were "noisily reclaiming the three-minute pop song in a show of public defiance", biographer David Buckley wrote that "Bowie almost completely abandoned traditional rock instrumentation."^{[241][242]} Bowie's record company promoted his unique status in popular music with the slogan, "There's old wave, there's new wave, and there's David Bowie".^[243] Musicologist James Perone credited him with having "brought sophistication to rock music", and critical reviews frequently acknowledged the intellectual depth of his work and influence.^{[239][244][245]} Human League founder Martyn Ware remarked on the depth of his pervasive artistry that he had lived his life "as though he were an art installation."^[246]

As described by John Peel, "The one distinguishing feature about early-70s progressive rock was that it didn't progress. Before Bowie came along, people didn't want too much change". Buckley called the era "bloated, self-important, leather-clad, self-satisfied"; then Bowie "subverted the whole notion of what it was to be a rock star".

After Bowie there has been no other pop icon of his stature, because the pop world that produces these rock gods doesn't exist any more. ... The fierce partisanship of the cult of Bowie was also unique—its influence lasted longer and has been more creative than perhaps almost any other force within pop fandom.

Buckley called Bowie "both star and icon. The vast body of work he has produced ... has created perhaps the biggest cult in popular culture. ... His influence has been unique in popular culture—he has permeated and altered more lives than any comparable figure."^[247]

Through continual reinvention, his influence broadened and extended.^[248] Biographer Thomas Forget added, "Because he has succeeded in so many different styles of music, it is almost impossible to find a popular artist today that has not been influenced by David Bowie."^[249] In 2000, Bowie was voted by other music stars as the "most influential artist of all time" in a poll by *NME*.^{[250][251]} Alexis Petridis of *The Guardian* wrote that Bowie was confirmed by 1980 to be "the most important and influential artist since the Beatles".^[252] Neil McCormick of *The Daily Telegraph* stated that Bowie had "one of the supreme careers in popular music, art and culture of the 20th century" and "he was too inventive, too mercurial, too strange for all but his most devoted fans to keep up with".^[253] The BBC's Mark Easton argued that Bowie provided fuel for "the creative powerhouse that Britain has become" by challenging future generations "to aim high, to be ambitious and provocative, to take risks". Easton concluded that Bowie had "changed the way the world sees Britain. And the way Britain sees itself".^[254] Annie Zaleski of *Alternative Press* wrote, "Every band or solo artist who's decided to rip up their playbook and start again owes a debt to Bowie".^[255] In 2016, he was dubbed "The Greatest Rock Star Ever" by *Rolling Stone* magazine.^[256]

Numerous figures from the music industry whose careers Bowie had influenced paid tribute to him following his death; panegyrics on Twitter (tweets about him peaked at 20,000 a minute an hour after his death)^[246] also came from outside the entertainment industry and pop culture, such as those from the Vatican, namely Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, who quoted "Space Oddity", and the Federal Foreign Office, which thanked Bowie for his part in the fall of the Berlin Wall and referenced "Heroes".^{[257][258]}

On 7 January 2017 the BBC broadcast the 90-minute documentary *David Bowie: The Last Five Years*, taking a detailed look at Bowie's last albums, *The Next Day* and *Blackstar*, and his play *Lazarus*.^[259] On 8 January 2017, which would have been Bowie's 70th birthday, a charity concert in his birthplace of Brixton was hosted by the actor Gary Oldman, a close friend.^[260] A David Bowie walking tour through Brixton was also launched, and other events marking his birthday weekend included concerts in New York, Los Angeles, Sydney, and Tokyo.^[261]

On 6 February 2018 the maiden flight of the SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket carried Elon Musk's personal Tesla Roadster and a mannequin affectionately named Starman into space. "Space Oddity" and "Life on Mars?" were looping on the car's sound system during the launch.^[262]

Musicianship



Bowie's Vox Mark VI guitar in the Hard Rock Cafe, Warsaw, Poland

From the time of his earliest recordings in the 1960s, Bowie employed a wide variety of musical styles. His early compositions and performances were strongly influenced by rock and rollers like Little Richard and Elvis Presley, and also the wider world of show business. He particularly strove to emulate the British musical theatre singer-songwriter and actor Anthony Newley, whose vocal style he frequently adopted, and made prominent use of for his 1967 debut release, *David Bowie* (to the disgust of Newley himself, who destroyed the copy he received from Bowie's publisher).^{[24][263]} Bowie's music hall fascination continued to surface sporadically alongside such diverse styles as hard rock and heavy metal, soul, psychedelic folk, and pop.^[264]

Musicologist James Perone observes Bowie's use of octave switches for different repetitions of the same melody, exemplified in his commercial breakthrough single, "Space Oddity", and later in the song "Heroes", to dramatic effect; Perone notes that "in the lowest part of his vocal register ... his voice has an almost crooner-like richness."^[265]

Voice instructor Jo Thompson describes Bowie's vocal vibrato technique as "particularly deliberate and distinctive".^[266] Schinder and Schwartz call him "a vocalist of extraordinary technical ability, able to pitch his singing to particular effect."^[267] Here, too, as in his stagecraft and songwriting, the singer's role playing is evident: historiographer Michael Campbell says that Bowie's lyrics "arrest our ear, without question. But Bowie continually shifts from person to person as he delivers them ... His voice changes dramatically from section to section."^[268] In a 2014 analysis of 77 "top" artists' vocal ranges, Bowie was 8th, just behind Christina Aguilera and just ahead of Paul McCartney.^[269] In addition to the guitar, Bowie also played a variety of keyboards, including piano, Mellotron, Chamberlin, and synthesizers; harmonica; alto and baritone saxophones; stylophone; viola; cello; koto (in the *Heroest* track "Moss Garden"); thumb piano; drums (on the *Heathen* track "Cactus"), and various percussion instruments.^{[270][271][272][273]}

Painter and art collector

Main article: David Bowie's art collection

Bowie was also a painter and artist. One of his paintings sold at auction in late 1990 for \$500,^[274] and the cover for his 1995 album *Outside* is a close-up of a self-portrait (from a series of five) he painted that same year.^[275] His first solo show was at The Gallery, Cork Street in 1995, entitled "New Afro/Pagan and Work: 1975–1995".^{[276][277]} He was invited to join the editorial board of the journal *Modern Painters* in 1998,^[278] and participated in the Nat Tate art hoax later that year.^[279]

In 1998 during an interview with Michael Kimmelman for The New York Times he said "Art was, seriously, the only thing I'd ever wanted to own."^[280] subsequently in 1999, in an interview for the BBC, he said "The only thing I buy obsessively and addictively is art".^[281] His art collection, which included works by Damien Hirst, Frank Auerbach, Henry Moore, and Jean-Michel Basquiat among others, was valued at over £10m in mid-2016.^[278]

After his death his family decided to sell most of the collection because they "didn't have the space" to store it.^[278] On 10 and 11 November three auctions were held at Sotheby's in London, first with 47 lots and second with 208 paintings, drawings, and sculptures, third with 100 design lots.^[282] The items on sale represented about 65 percent of the collection.^[283] Exhibition of the works in the auction attracted 51,470 visitors, the auction itself was attended by 1,750 bidders, with over 1,000 more bidding online. The auctions has overall sale total £32.9 million (app. \$41.5 million), while the highest-selling item, Jean-Michel Basquiat's graffiti-inspired painting *Air Power*, sold for £7.09 million.^{[282][284]}

Personal life

Family



Bowie and wife Iman, 2009

Bowie married his first wife, Mary Angela Barnett on 19 March 1970 at Bromley Register Office in Bromley, London. Their son Duncan, born on 30 May 1971, was at first known as Zowie.^[285] Bowie and Angela divorced on 8 February 1980 in Switzerland.^[286]

On 24 April 1992, Bowie married Somali-American model Iman in a private ceremony in Lausanne. The wedding was later solemnised on 6 June in Florence.^[287] They had one daughter, Alexandria "Lexi" Zahra Jones, born in August 2000.^{[288][289]} The couple resided primarily in New York City and London, as well as owning an apartment in Sydney's Elizabeth Bay.^{[290][291]} and Britannia Bay House on the island of Mustique,^[292] now renamed Mandalay Estate.

Sexuality

Bowie declared himself gay in an interview with Michael Watts for a 1972 issue of *Melody Maker*,^[293] coinciding with his campaign for stardom as Ziggy Stardust.^[58] According to Buckley, "If Ziggy confused both his creator and his audience, a big part of that confusion centred on the topic of sexuality."^[294] In a September 1976 interview with *Playboy*, Bowie said, "It's true—I am a bisexual. But I can't deny that I've used that fact very well. I suppose it's the best thing that ever happened to me."^[295] His first wife, Angie, supports his claim of bisexuality and alleges that Bowie had a relationship with Mick Jagger.^{[296][297]}

In a 1983 interview with *Rolling Stone*, Bowie said his public declaration of bisexuality was "the biggest mistake I ever made" and "I was always a closet heterosexual."^[298] On other occasions, he said his interest in homosexual and bisexual culture had been more a product of the times and the situation in which he found himself than of his own feelings.^{[299][a]}

Blender asked Bowie in 2002 whether he still believed his public declaration was his biggest mistake. After a long pause, he said, "I don't think it was a mistake in Europe, but it was a lot tougher in America. I had no problem with people knowing I was bisexual. But I had no inclination to hold any banners nor be a representative of any group of people." Bowie said he wanted to be a songwriter and performer rather than a headline for his bisexuality, and in "puritanical" America, "I think it stood in the way of so much I wanted to do."^[301]

Buckley wrote that Bowie "mined sexual intrigue for its ability to shock",^[302] and was probably "never gay, nor even consistently actively bisexual", instead experimenting "out of a sense of curiosity and a genuine allegiance with the 'transgressional'."^[303] Biographer Christopher Sandford said, according to Mary Finnigan—with whom Bowie had an affair in 1969—the singer and his first wife Angie "created their bisexual fantasy".^[304] Sandford wrote that Bowie "made a positive fetish of repeating the quip that he and his wife had met while 'fucking the same bloke' ... Gay sex was always an anecdotal and laughing matter. That Bowie's actual tastes swung the other way is clear from even a partial tally of his affairs with women."^[304] The BBC's Mark Easton wrote in 2016 that Britain was "far more tolerant of difference" and that gay rights, such as same-sex marriage, and gender equality would not have "enjoyed the broad support they do today without Bowie's androgynous challenge all those years ago".^[254]

Spirituality and religion

Over the years, Bowie made numerous references to religions and to his evolving spirituality. Beginning in 1967, he showed an interest in Buddhism; after a few months' study at Tibet House in London, he was told by a Lama, "You don't want to be Buddhist. ... You should follow music."^[305] By 1975, Bowie admitted, "I felt totally, absolutely alone. And I probably was alone because I pretty much had abandoned God."^[300]

After Bowie married Iman in a private ceremony in 1992, he said they knew that their "real marriage, sanctified by God, had to happen in a church in Florence".^[306] Earlier that year, he knelt on stage at The Freddie Mercury Tribute Concert and recited the Lord's Prayer before a television audience.^{[129][b]} In 1993, Bowie said he had an "undying" belief in the "unquestionable" existence of God.^[300] In a separate 1993 interview, while describing the genesis of the music for his album *Black Tie White Noise*, he said "...it was important for me to find something [musically] that also had no sort of representation of institutionalized and organized religion, of which I'm not a believer, I must make that clear."^[307] Interviewed in 2005, Bowie said whether God exists "is not a question that can be answered. ... I'm not quite an atheist and it worries me. There's that little bit that holds on: 'Well, I'm *almost* an atheist. Give me a couple of months. ... I've nearly got it right."^[308] In his will, Bowie stipulated that he be cremated and his ashes scattered in Bali "in accordance with the Buddhist rituals".^[309]

"Questioning my spiritual life has always been germane" to Bowie's songwriting.^[308] "Station to Station" is "very much concerned with the Stations of the Cross"; the song also specifically references Kabbalah. Bowie called the album "extremely dark ... the nearest album to a magick treatise that I've written".^{[310][c]} *Earthling* showed "the abiding need in me to vacillate between atheism or a kind of gnosticism ... What I need is to find a balance, spiritually, with the way I live and my demise."^[312] Released shortly before his death, "Lazarus"—from his final album, *Blackstar*—began with the words, "Look up here, I'm in Heaven" while the rest of the album deals with other matters of mysticism and mortality.^[313]

Politics

In 1976, speaking as The Thin White Duke, Bowie's persona at the time, and "at least partially tongue-in-cheek", he made statements that expressed support for fascism and perceived admiration for Adolf Hitler in interviews with *Playboy*, *NME*, and a Swedish publication. Bowie was quoted as saying: "Britain is ready for a fascist leader... I think Britain could benefit from a fascist leader. After all, fascism is really nationalism... I believe very strongly in fascism, people have always responded with greater efficiency under a regimental leadership." He was also quoted as saying: "Adolf Hitler was one of the first rock stars" and "You've got to have an extreme right front come up and sweep everything off its feet and tidy everything up."^{[314][315]} Bowie later retracted these comments in an interview with *Melody Maker* in October 1977, blaming them on mental instability caused by his drug problems at the time, saying: "I was out of my mind, totally, completely crazed."^[316]

In the 1980s and 1990s, Bowie's public statements shifted sharply towards anti-racism and anti-fascism. In an interview with MTV in 1983, Bowie criticised the channel for not providing enough coverage of black musicians,^{[317][318]} and the music videos for "China Girl" and "Let's Dance" were described by Bowie as a "very simple, very direct" statement against racism.^[319] The album *Tin Machine* took a more direct stance against fascism and Neo-Nazism, and was criticised for being too preachy.^[119]

In 2016, filmmaker and activist Michael Moore said he had wanted to use "Panic in Detroit" for his 1998 documentary *The Big One*; denied at first, he was given the rights after calling Bowie personally. "I've read stuff since his death saying that he wasn't that political and he stayed away from politics. But that wasn't the conversation that I had with him."^[320]

Death

Main article: Death of David Bowie



A woman places flowers outside Bowie's apartment in New York on Lafayette Street the day after his death was announced

On 10 January 2016, two days after his 69th birthday and the release of the album *Blackstar*, Bowie died from liver cancer in his New York City apartment.^[321] He had been diagnosed 18 months earlier but had not made the news of his illness public.^[322] The Belgian theatre director Ivo van Hove, who had worked with the singer on his Off-Broadway musical *Lazarus*, explained that Bowie was unable to attend rehearsals due to the progression of the disease. He noted that Bowie had kept working during the illness.^[323]

Bowie's producer Tony Visconti wrote:

He always did what he wanted to do. And he wanted to do it his way and he wanted to do it the best way. His death was no different from his life – a work of art. He made *Blackstar* for us, his parting gift. I knew for a year this was the way it would be. I wasn't, however, prepared for it. He was an extraordinary man, full of love and life. He will always be with us. For now, it is appropriate to cry.^{[324][325]}

Following Bowie's death, fans gathered at impromptu street shrines.^[326] At the mural of Bowie in his birthplace of Brixton, south London, which shows him in his *Aladdin Sane* character, fans laid flowers and sang his songs.^[327] Other memorial sites included Berlin, Los Angeles, and outside his apartment in New York.^[328] After news of his death, sales of his albums and singles soared.^[329] Bowie had insisted that he did not want a funeral, and according to his death certificate he was cremated in New Jersey on 12 January.^[330] As he wished in his will, his ashes were scattered in Bali, Indonesia.^[1]

Awards and recognition

Main article: List of awards and nominations received by David Bowie

Variety of Bowie's outfits on display at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

Bowie's 1969 commercial breakthrough, the song "Space Oddity", won him an Ivor Novello Special Award For Originality.^[331] For his performance in the 1976 science fiction film *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, he won a Saturn Award for Best Actor. In the ensuing decades he was honoured with numerous awards for his music and its accompanying videos, receiving, among others, six Grammy Awards^{[332][333][224]} and four Brit Awards—winning Best British Male Artist twice; the award for Outstanding Contribution to Music in 1996; and the Brits Icon award for his "lasting impact on British culture", given posthumously in 2016.^{[334][335][336]}

In 1999, Bowie was made a Commander of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government.^[337] He received an honorary doctorate from Berklee College of Music the same year.^[338] He declined the royal honour of Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2000, and turned down a knighthood in 2003.^[339] Bowie later stated "I would never have any intention of accepting anything like that. I seriously don't know what it's for. It's not what I spent my life working for."^[340]



A mural of Bowie in different guises in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Telegraph in 2016 estimated Bowie's total worldwide sales at 140 million records.^{[341][d]} In the United Kingdom, he was awarded 9 platinum, 11 gold, and 8 silver albums, and in the United States, 5 platinum and 9 gold.^[343]

In 2003, six of Bowie's albums appeared on *Rolling Stone*'s list of the 500 Greatest Albums of All Time.^[344] In 2004, four of Bowie's songs appeared on the *Rolling Stone* list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time. Additionally, four of his songs are included in The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's 500 Songs that Shaped Rock and Roll.^[345]

In the BBC's 2002 poll of the 100 Greatest Britons, he was ranked 29.^[346] In 2004, *Rolling Stone* magazine ranked him 39th on their list of the 100 Greatest Rock Artists of All Time.^[347] Bowie was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1996.^[137] He was inducted into the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame in 2013.^{[348][349]} In 2016, *Rolling Stone* proclaimed Bowie "the greatest rock star ever".^[350]

In 2008, the spider *Heteropoda davidbowie* was named in Bowie's honour.^[351] On 5 January 2015, a main-belt asteroid was named 342843 Davidbowie.^[352] On 13 January 2016, Belgian amateur astronomers at MIRA Public Observatory created a "Bowie asterism" of seven stars which had been in the vicinity of Mars at the time of Bowie's death; the "constellation" forms the lightning bolt on Bowie's face from the cover of his *Aladdin Sane* album.^[353]

On 25 March 2018 a statue of Bowie was unveiled in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, the town where he debuted Ziggy Stardust.^[354] The statue features a likeness of Bowie in 2002 accompanied with his alter egos, with Ziggy at the front.^[355]

Discography

Main article: David Bowie discography

Studio albums

- *David Bowie* (1967)
- *David Bowie* (also released as *Space Oddity*) (1969)
- *The Man Who Sold the World* (1970)
- *Hunky Dory* (1971)
- *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* (1972)
- *Aladdin Sane* (1973)
- *Pin Ups* (1973)
- *Diamond Dogs* (1974)
- *Young Americans* (1975)
- *Station to Station* (1976)
- *Low* (1977)
- *"Heroes"* (1977)
- *Lodger* (1979)
- *Scary Monsters (and Super Creeps)* (1980)
- *Let's Dance* (1983)
- *Tonight* (1984)
- *Never Let Me Down* (1987)
- *Black Tie White Noise* (1993)
- *The Buddha of Suburbia* (soundtrack album) (1993)
- *Outside* (1995)
- *Earthling* (1997)
- *Hours* (1999)
- *Heathen* (2002)
- *Reality* (2003)
- *The Next Day* (2013)
- *Blackstar* (2016)

Filmography







Main article: David Bowie filmography

Selected film roles

- *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976) as Thomas Jerome Newton; received a Saturn Award for Best Actor
- *Just a Gigolo* (1978) as Paul Ambrosius von Przygodski
- *Christiane F.* (1981) cameo as himself
- *The Snowman* (1982) narrator in re-released version
- *Baal* (1982) as Baal

- *Yellowbeard* (1983) the sailor wearing shark fin – The Shark
- *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* (1983) as Maj. Jack 'Strafer' Celliers
- *The Hunger* (1983) as John Blaylock
- *Jazzin' for Blue Jean* (1984) as Vic and Screaming Lord Byron
- *Into the Night* (1985) as Colin Morris
- *Labyrinth* (1986) as Jareth the Goblin King
- *Absolute Beginners* (1986) as Vendice Partners
- *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) as Pontius Pilate
- *The Linguini Incident* (1991) as Monte
- *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992) as Phillip Jeffries
- *Dream On* (television series) (1991) as Sir Roland Moorecock
- *Basquiat* (1996) as Andy Warhol
- *Gunslinger's Revenge* (1998) as Jack Sikora
- *Everybody Loves Sunshine* (1999) as Bernie
- *Mr. Rice's Secret* (2000) as William Rice
- *Zoolander* (2001) cameo as himself; nominated for a MTV Movie Award for Best Cameo
- *Arthur and the Invisibles* (2006) as Malthazar (voice)
- *The Prestige* (2006) as Nikola Tesla
- *Bandslam* (2009) – brief cameo role

See also

-  **David Bowie portal**
-  **Biography portal**
-  **Arts portal**
-  **Film portal**
-  **Music portal**
-  **LGBT portal**
- *Nat Tate: An American Artist 1928–1960*
- Celebrity bond
- List of ambient music artists
- List of artists by number of UK Albums Chart number ones
- List of artists who reached number one in the United States
- List of artists who reached number one on the US Dance Club Songs chart
- List of best-selling music artists
- List of David Bowie concert tours

- List of Billboard number-one Dance Club songs
- List of Billboard number-one singles

Notes

1. ^ In 1993, Bowie recalled having read *City of Night* in the 1960s, and it connected with his loneliness. "And that led me a merry dance in the early Seventies, when gay clubs really became my lifestyle and all my friends were gay".^[300]
2. ^ Asked why he knelt and prayed, Bowie said he had a friend who was dying of AIDS. "He was just dropping into a coma that day. And just before I went on stage something just told me to say the Lord's Prayer. The great irony is that he died two days after the show".^[300]
3. ^ He later said he was influenced by his cocaine addiction and the "psychological terror" from making *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, marking "the first time I'd really seriously thought about Christ and God ... I very nearly got suckered into that narrow [view of] finding the Cross as the salvation of mankind".^[311]
4. ^ Additional sources place this figure somewhere between 100 million and 150 million.^[342]

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1. ^ Jump up to:^a ^b Woolf, Nicky. "David Bowie's Will Detailed, Ashes Scattered in Bali". *The Guardian*. Retrieved 7 May 2016.
2. ^ "How to say: Bowie". *BBC*. 8 January 2008. Retrieved 16 September 2010.
3. ^ Jump up to:^a ^b "David Bowie FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions".
4. ^ Jump up to:^a ^b "Bowie mourns mother's death". 2 April 2001 – via *bbc.co.uk*.
5. ^ Gillman (1987) p.17 "[Peggy] was born in the hospital at Shorncliffe Camp [near Folkestone, Kent] on October 2nd, 1913."
6. ^ Gillman (1987) p.15 "[Her father] Jimmy Burns's parents were poor Irish immigrants who had settled in Manchester" p.16 "[Jimmy] had known [her mother] in Manchester. Her name was Margaret Heaton"
7. ^ Gillman (1987) p. 44 "At the end of the war, Peggy Burns was working as a waitress at the Ritz cinema in Tunbridge Wells"
8. ^ Gillman (1987) p. 44 "John Jones was born in the grimy Yorkshire town of Doncaster in 1912."
9. ^ Sandford (1997): pp. 9–16
10. ^ Jump up to:^a ^b Sandford (1997): pp. 18–19
11. ^ Buckley (2000): p. 21.
12. ^ Jump up to:^a ^b ^c Sandford (1997): pp. 19–20
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