

Arts and Entertainment

Ziggy's 'glitter rock' outshines technical slop

Analysis By Billy Schaffer
Daily Nebraskan Staff Editor

"Ziggy Stardust" is a concert movie. Filmed in London in 1973, it took 10 years for completion when David Bowie himself produced the final mix. It is a documentary chronicling the last concert Bowie performed in the persona of Ziggy, sort of a man who fell to earth with a guitar.

Ziggy was one of Bowie's first trips into portraying diverse characters from his strange imagination. If this movie does nothing else, it indisputably validates Bowie as the king of glitter rock, that bizarre genre of music that reared its purple-and-orange head in the early '70s. Glitter rock was music that combined outrageous costumes, heavy-duty rock riffs, and a theatrical approach to stage performance. With the help of his

backup band, the "Spiders From Mars," (especially Mick Ronson on lead guitar) Bowie excelled in all three areas.

The film is 90 percent Bowie, Bowie close-ups singing, Bowie criss-crossing the stage in a leotard that will set Danskin back 20 years, Bowie backstage with his make-up staff, etc. The remaining 10 percent of the flick is divided between shots of strobe-lit females swooning in the audience, and an occasional guitar solo by Mick Ronson. Bowie has costumes, make-up, good looks, sexual androgyny and charismatic magic. But 90 minutes might border on overkill except for the die-hard Bowie fanatic.

The most important aspect of the film is the fact that it is a document of the incredible originality of the performer and the fact that all this was done 11

years ago. Taken in context, the Ziggy Stardust show was obviously one of the greatest rock extravaganzas ever assembled. The power of the lyrics and performance still make MTV look like sugar candy.

A person I met in Chicago who knows David Bowie told me that he is a fragile kind of creature that you want to take home and cuddle and feed a good meal. That may be true offstage, but as a performer, the guy's got that special something that only guys like Jagger, Hendrix, and Prince generate.

Eleven years old or not, "Ziggy Stardust" is a powerful statement of originality and creative vision. Technically, the film is sloppy. Somehow, that doesn't matter that much.



Photo Courtesy of 20th Century-Fox

David Bowie as Ziggy Stardust.

'Dreamscape' included in growing list of winners

Review by Ward W. Triplett III
Daily Nebraskan Staff Editor

One of my fellow workers recently accused me of being too kind to many movies. "Oxford Blues" was the latest example, a film that apparently hasn't met with a lot

of great public opinion.

Plenty of things were going on in "Oxford Blues" that made it a predictable rehash of an old theme, but nothing that really made it a damnable excursion into banality either. Plus, Rob Lowe and Ally Sheedy show signs of being good actors.

Still, since the negatives are more fun to write about and pick out, here are the negative things about "Dreamscape," a science fiction adventure about psychic invasion of the human subconscious.

First of all, it does not have Ally Sheedy in it.

Second, it does have Kate Capshaw. She copped a lead role here, and weak roles in "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" and "Best Defense" all in one summer. Yet "Dreamscape" proves that she really can't act very well. If that's not the problem, then her agent is going for the quantity of roles, not quality. But who needs awards anyway?

Third, "Dreamscape" characters are shallow and one dimensional. The story risks becoming a regular-boring sci-fi tale because of it.

Fourth, and most unforgivably, the dreamscapes that make up the most fascinating part of the movie are too short. Then, there are not enough of them.

Fifth, there's the problem of toying with the facts of the script. The mind-linkers can go into a person's dream right after the person falls asleep. I haven't contacted the sleep lab or anybody on this, but I've always heard that dreams occur right before a person wakes up. (That could be

explained if the characters were going to wake up then, but the doctors involved have to forcibly shake the dreamers back into reality.)

Inconsistencies in science fiction are nothing new, and I doubt if a good one should leave you time to think about intangibles like this. But even so, with my apologies to my co-worker, I liked "Dreamscape" because of its original idea and special effects bombardment. I would recommend it almost without reservation. But the idea suffers when the story bogs down to a one-on-one dream-land fight, which could have been

more imaginative.

The idea is an intriguing one that can be taken beyond the film. A university research team is investigating the possibility of reaching another person's subconscious through a dream. A futuristic Frankenstein wire hook-up has been perfected by the time the movie starts, and two psychics actually are capable of entering a subject's mind, encountering whatever may be irking that person. They hope to destroy the demon and make sleep peaceful for that person again.

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Photo Courtesy of Chevy Chase Films

Alex (Dennis Quaid) enters the nightmare of a construction worker who dreams he is falling from a great height.

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