

Arts & Entertainment

'Bowie' shows chaos of star's life

By Marc Seger
Staff Reporter

"Bowie," 1985 MacMillan Publishing Company, 286 pages, \$17.95.

Book Review

Jerry Hopkins has written an excellent biography of David Bowie. Titled simply "Bowie," the book succeeds, as did the volume Hopkins co-authored about Jim Morrison, "No One Here Gets Out Alive."

"Bowie" traces the life of the man born David Robert Jones from childhood through early musical endeavors in rhythm and blues to the end of his Serious Moonlight Tour in late 1983.

Bowie's is a shocking and sometimes painful success story that includes bouts with drugs, mercenary managers like Tony DeFries and social rifts with family members and fellow musicians.

The book includes a telling look at Bowie's unconventional marriage with Angela Barnett and the factors that contributed to its breakup.

Hopkins quotes frequently from musical periodicals and newspapers,

mostly reprinting quotations by Bowie. Inconsistencies surface, most notably about Bowie's sexuality.

Bowie is a constantly changing person who jumped from rhythm and blues to folk music to being the founding father of glitter rock — and then to white plastic soul to pop dance. This dynamism explains how Bowie can claim to be gay in one interview, heterosexual in another and bi-sexual in a third.

Adding to the confusion is the way Bowie sometimes answers interview questions in the persona of the stage character he is using at the time, which

is something he admits to doing.

Hopkins shows how Bowie became the pitiful, drug-filled but extremely entertaining Ziggy Stardust. We are shown how a frustrated Bowie tried to put off recording albums to cut down on the royalties that his manager, Tony DeFries, could collect. DeFries was collecting more than 50 percent of the take when Bowie was with RCA.

The book also covers in depth Bowie's acting career, including his roles in the movies "The Man Who Fell to Earth" and "The Hunger," his stage work as John Merrick in "The Elephant Man" and his genre-defining efforts with

music videos.

The biography relates any amusing stories, including one about an interviewer who mistook Bowie's wife for Bowie himself, even though they were sitting side by side. Another good one involves a "Melody Maker" writer who raved about a "goddess" in Bowie's "Boys Keep Swinging" video, only to find out "she" was Bowie.

"Bowie" is a well-done story of an intriguing performer's career. It effectively shows details of the origin and execution of each stage in the life of an entertainer who would like to be known as a generalist.

Oh, baby, massage my throbbing intellect!

Having been out of circulation, as it were, for the past couple of years, I recently endeavored to venture forth in search of that ephemeral feeling that can only be accomplished by engaging in certain social interactions where intoxicants are present.

In other words, I decided to hit a few parties the other night.

I remember, from the not too distant past, parties as places where football players monopolized all the female attention and those handsome intellectuals, like myself, were subjected to ridicule and forced to the remotest corners of yon room.

Imagine my surprise when, upon entering the party, I noticed the behemoths of humanity against the wall while four-eyed studiers of ancient philosophies were surrounded, nay, mauled by the sensual lasses.

"Er, excuse me, miss," I said to a young lady wearing a leopard skin suit and purring at a rather good reproduction of one of Rembrandt's finest, "but wouldn't you rather lust after the carnal pleasures of yon athlete than peruse this rather dry piece of art?"

"Oh, get real, guy," she said, in much the same way former young women had rejected my offers of a midnight rendezvous. "Where have you been? Don't you know that intellectualism is in? With this new fitness craze, athletes are a dime a dozen."

I've been called many things in my rather short, on a relative scale, existence, but seldom have I been called mentally slow. Before, I might have attributed to her the taste of certain smaller reptiles. But I looked at the young lady and quite suavely said, "So, what's your major?"

"Biochemistry," she said, "With minors in English, business administration and Eastern philosophies."

"Wow, didn't I see you on 'Jeopardy'?"

"Huh?"

"Nothing, uh, I don't suppose there's a game of quarters going on around here someplace?"

"Quarters? How barbaric. You can, however, engage in a rather lucrative

game of Trivial Pursuit that's going on in the kitchen. I understand those zanies are actually playing while drinking alcohol."

"No, really! You mean if you miss a question you have to chug a beer?"

"Well, actually, I think they're sipping wine."

She looked at me like I used to look at drunk nerds. I wandered, meandered, made my way to the kitchen, where I was accosted by a rather buxom female who asked me if I might care to join her in the far bedroom. I accepted the offer, temporarily willing to throw away all semblance of self respect for a few hours of wanton, heedless passion.



Bill Allen

As she had just finished a research paper on her work at an archeological site and wanted someone to hear it before she typed the final draft.

"Excuse me," I said, at about page 17, "wouldn't you rather open the window and look at the stars, gaze at the moon and hold hands?"

"Well, it is a bit warm in here," she said, "so you can open the window, but how can I read this report if I'm looking at the stars, and how can I turn the pages if I'm holding your hand?"

She had a point. So I left.

I went into the living room and sat by a tall fellow wearing tennis shoes, jeans and a Nebraska sweatshirt. He looked really out of place.

"Some party," I said, sarcastically, caustically.

"Really," he said. "But you know how it is with guys like us. Girls just aren't turned on by muscles and athletic prowess."

"What is this awful music they're playing?"

"Beethoven, or something like that."

"Never heard of them," I said, "So, what's your major?"

"Oh, that hasn't been decided for me yet, but I'm the starting quarterback on the football team."

"Oh, gee, no wonder the girls stay away from you."

"Yeah, it's no fun being a jock when all girls want are brains."

"Too bad you can't be both."

"Yeah. If I had a high GPA, the girls might overlook the fact that I throw a football around on Saturday."

We looked over in the corner where a budding physicist was getting a back and neck massage by a freshman woman in tight shorts and a halter top. Her twin sister was looking with dreamy eyes at a young man spouting Shakespeare.

There was no way I was going to take this. Like the old saying goes, if you can't beat 'em, outsmart 'em.

"Hey QB," I said, while a little light-bulb danced above my head, "Grab a couple of Einsteins and carry them outside."

We tied up the scholars with their own shoelaces, then donned their glasses and graduation caps. We picked up a couple of books as we re-entered the party and tucked them gently under our arms.

QB looked like Clark Kent. I looked like Henry Kissinger.

"Just follow my lead, QB," I said, winking and heading toward a bevy of intelligent, attractive and sorely misguided coeds.

"Er, excuse me, miss," I said, tapping one on her gently sloping shoulder. "But my associate and I, both undergraduates, are at a loss for proper research partners."

"Hi! I'm Bubbles. Oooh, you look absolutely scholarly. I'm getting psyched just looking at all that academia."

"Terrific. Two hundred women at this party and I hit on a sorority girl."

"Well, um yes," I said. "I don't understand this 'psyched' business, but about the research..."

"Research? And you want little ol' me to help?"

"Help me," QB said. I kicked him in the shin.

"That is, we want you to help if you have the correct psychological qualifications for the work, right, QB...er, I



Tom Lauder/Daily Nebraskan

mean Ph.D."

"She looks fine to me," the lustful dog said.

"Easy, Ph.D.," I said, threateningly, "We wouldn't want to rush things."

"Just what kind of research do you gentlemen do?" Bubbles asked.

"Strictly lab work, Bubbles," I said, my face a concrete slab, "Very dry stuff. Only someone truly interested in academics and the better of humankind need apply."

"That's me," she said, "High school valedictorian, 4.0, captain of the speech and debate teams."

"Well, we will need another like-minded woman," I said, "and people as

interested in research as yourself, Bubbles, are hard to find."

"No way," Bubbles said. "DiDi, come over here. We're going to help with some research. What a great party."

"Get your coats, ladies. QB, is your lab ready?"

"I left the whirlpool on, Bill." Thank goodness for rich alumni.

They carried our books, and we walked out of the party and into research history.

Our subject, of course, was the deeply psychological ramifications of the emotional and sexual relationships between college men and women.

It's all very dry stuff, but all in the name of science, my friends, all in the name of science.

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