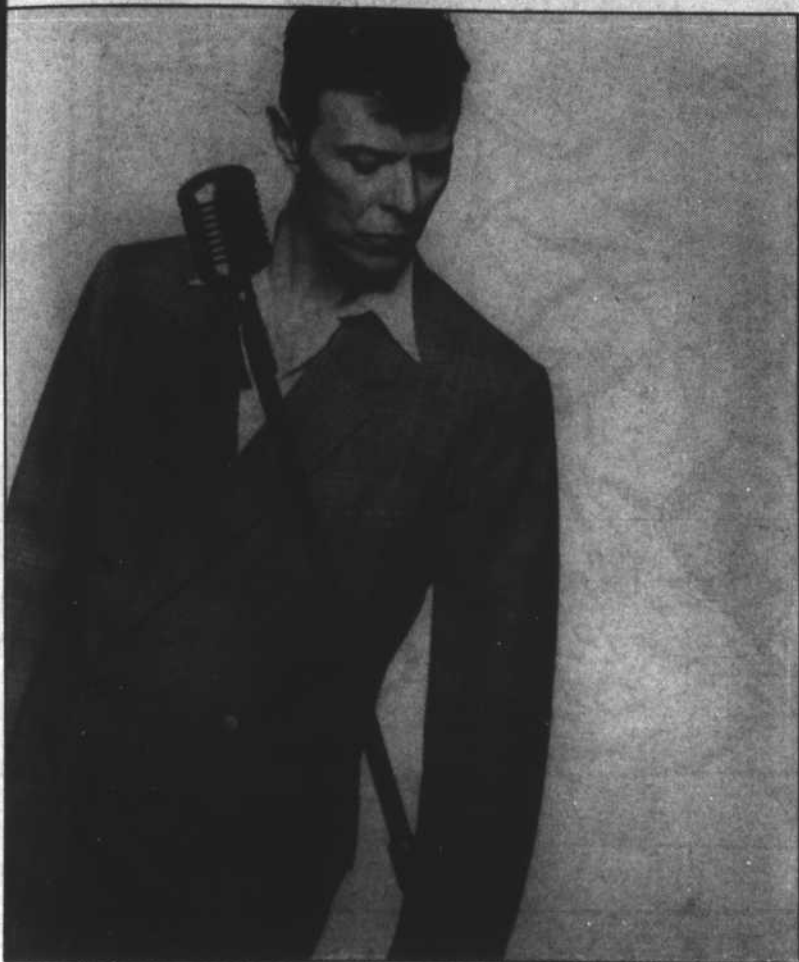


Still around Bowie falls flat while Sting becomes master of music



Courtesy of Savage Records

"Black Tie White Noise" David Bowie Savage Records-BMG

David Bowie's soul has been sucked into the world's largest drum machine with only his saxophone to keep him company. At least that's what is to be assumed after listening to "Black Tie White Noise," his latest release.

"Black Tie" sounds like the soundtrack to an upbeat movie about happy, rich people living in Los Angeles.

This could be hip-hop for 40-year-olds. Bowie has created an album almost devoid of upfront riffs or hooks, and the thin-white duke swims through a thick, black oil of sound.

There is some beauty on "Black Tie White Noise," and a sense of majesty also.

"The Wedding Song" and its refrain are glorious; easily the most uplifting music Bowie has ever written. The song is based on the score Bowie wrote for his wedding to Iman. The songs "Pallas Athena" and "Miracle Goodnight" also deserve praise for their driving, innovative qualities.

But "Jump They Say" would have been a better song if Bowie had simply put his sequins to the grindstone, tossed his boring cool aside and

screamed like a Moonage Daydream.

And the Starman's cover of Morrissey's "I Know It's Gonna Happen Someday" is a good example of the album's shortcomings: Bowie brags on his press-release sheet that the song was originally based on his own style ("It's me doing Morrissey doing me," he states), but, in fact, Bowie oversings the melody altogether.

With a vibrato like a musical saw and much-too-much melodrama, Bowie fails to fly with the currents of the song's heartaching irony, and makes the song sound flat and tired. In an attempt to keep the young kids in their place, Bowie has fallen on his perfect nose.

Any fan who remembers Bowie in his former superstar personas—Ziggy Stardust, Halloween Jack, Aladdin Sane—would happily toss "Black Tie White Noise" out the window, as they would any other album he has written since the early '80s.

"Black Tie" is the best album Bowie has produced in more than a decade. Let's hope they keep getting better, until the Stardust Man travels "the width of a circle" back to his former glory.

— Patrick Hambrecht



Courtesy Point Music-Polygram Records



"Low: Symphony by Philip Glass From the Music of David Bowie & Brian Eno" The Brooklyn Philharmonic Or- chestra Point Music-Polygram Records

It's not glitter rock, a genocidal celebration or wacky dance music; the second time around for David Bowie's "Low" is a classical interpre-

It's misty, ambivalent movements make the listener look for any sign of the personal, a trademark quality of Eno's gaseous melodies.

taution by Philip Glass, moving stardust music from the electronic mixer to the orchestra pit.

The album takes three slow-moving instrumentals from Bowie's and Brian Eno's 1977 album "Low" and replaces glippy "Space Invaders" effects with violins, flutes and cellos.

Glass' revamp of silver-age Bowie plays in three parts and each is a translation of a different synthesized

instrumental that Eno and Bowie recorded together in 1976.

"Subterraneans," the first track, has almost no human zeal, tragic or triumphant, in its first half. It's misty, ambivalent movements make the listener look for any sign of the personal, a trademark quality of Eno's gaseous melodies. The second half of the song is in the style of a Gershwin theme, but is still non-personal: It switches from the barren silence of a dead galaxy to the clatter of automated hammers.

"Some Are" matches the happy, wondering style of Debussy's "Afternoon With A Faun" just barely, and is probably the best of the trio.

"Warszawa," the third song, is dwarfed by Bowie's original version.

— Patrick Hambrecht



Courtesy of A&M Records

Sting "Ten Summoner's Tales" A&M Records

Anything positive said about Sting's latest album, "Ten Summoner's Tales," is an understatement. It is now highly debatable whether Sting has any peers (other than Paul Simon) in the art of pop songcraft.

What makes this album an instant classic? It's purely a matter of songwriting. Throw aside the fact that Sting's musicians are among the best in the business, brush aside the sex symbol pose for the camera, strip the album to its songs, and the master's art is truly revealed.

The slick 7/4 time signatures, the constant key changes and the bridges are tooled with a jeweler's hand. If "Summoner's" seems strangely familiar to the Sting fan, there's good reason. A staggering number of musical parallels to and expansions on his previous work can be found here.

"If I Ever Lose My Faith In You" recalls and exceeds "Jeremiah Blues" in its irresistible hooks. "Something The Boy Said" might as well be called "The Soul Cages II" — another perfect pair for Sting's famous onstage medleys.

"St. Augustine In Hell" contains a jazz waltz interlude called "I Miss You Kate" from "The Soul Cages" sessions. And have we already been introduced to the timeless lament, "a thousand rainy days since we first met/it's a big enough umbrella, but it's always me that ends up getting wet"?

This album is a treasure chest for enthusiasts and old fans.

The jewel of the album is the incredibly seductive tale of addiction to probability, "Shape Of My Heart."

Sting, of course, in a vain attempt to cling to his privacy, prefers to play the Thespian.

The album ends with the taunt "Pick my brain, pick my pockets, steal my eyeballs and come back for the sockets, and you'll still know nothing 'bout me." That goes for music critics in hell, too.

— Carter Van Pelt

Ginsberg

Continued from Page 10

home of Steven Boyd of The Nebraska Chapter of Jewel Heart, the group that invited Ginsberg to read in Lincoln.

Also present was Gelek Rinpoche, the spiritual director of Jewel Heart and one of Ginsberg's teachers in the disciplines of Tibetan Buddhism.

Ginsberg and Rinpoche had spent the morning talking and chanting on KZUM for almost one and a half hours. After eating lunch, Ginsberg talked for another hour to media and other interested people, before dashing off to sign books for two more hours.

Developing a sitting practice of meditation — "a tool for experiencing the texture of my consciousness and recognizing my emotions as they arrive" — is a logical progression from Ginsberg's early ambition as a poet, he said.

"Kerouac and I had a phrase in 1945-46 of 'new vision' or 'new consciousness' — I don't think we knew what it meant, or knew how to apply it except that we were interested in experiencing out unconsciousness or the texture of consciousness."

At that time, that meant altering consciousness through drugs,

Ginsberg said. Then Kerouac began experimenting with Buddhist chanting and meditation, leading him to write a biography of Buddha:

"He was then proselytizing me and trying to tell me that existence contains suffering; existence is transitory and there is no permanent Allen Ginsberg."

In the early 1960s Ginsberg travelled to India to learn more about Buddhism. On his return, as part of his search for self-knowledge, he took LSD.

"LSD was an auxiliary technique for checking myself out. It wasn't that we used drugs — or I didn't — every day. I took acid maybe a dozen times, you know every couple of years, just to see the map or the landscape, then maybe come down to earth and figure out what to do with the information."

Today, Ginsberg said, he smokes marijuana occasionally. He is also forthright on the issue of legalizing the drug, what he calls "a very mild thing."

"The war on drugs is some kind of political plague because everybody is complaining about overcrowding in the courts, in the jails, people who have committed murders are let out too early because the jails are overcrowded, because the jails are crowded

with people who have committed crimes without victims," he said.

Ginsberg has often been criticized for his views on drugs, his homosexuality, and his actions — which have led to him being sentenced to Columbia Psychiatric Institute and being tried on obscenity charges after the publication of his most famous work "Howl."

He has been called crazy and immoral by some people, while others see him almost as a saint. Ginsberg seems to enjoy both. He admits that he will deliberately say things to provoke reactions in people. But on the whole, he said, he has only spoken his thoughts honestly.

Ginsberg continues to speak out. But now, after the beats and the hippies and the changes they caused, he appears to find more reason to have faith in the world.

"Do you know what Kerouac predicted would come? A found generation. That might be now," he said.

"People have found themselves, finally, found their own nature. That had to be, that would happen sooner or later."

He paused, then qualified the statement: "It would be nice if it would come. If you say it's going to come, insist that it comes and actually start turning the wheel, then, sooner or later it will come."

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