



SOUND and Vision

THE CULTURE-SHIFTING FASHIONS OF A PROVOCATIVE ROCK ICON

Before Björk and Lady Gaga were confounding the public in eccentric, notoriety-earning stage getups, rock icon David Bowie stunned in gender-bending costumes that turned convention upside down. Today's crop of entertainment nonconformists owe much to Bowie, who incensed conservatives with his sexual polymorphism—rebellion realized in unforgettablely salacious ensembles.

In Spring of 2013, 40 years after the maverick musician first made his mark on pop culture as *Ziggy Stardust*, London's *Victoria and Albert Museum* will unveil *David Bowie Is*, an exhibition fêting

Bowie's career. Offering a comprehensive look at the attire and music whose salient impact lives on, the exhibit allows visitors to walk their way through the stages of Bowie's creative evolution—dashing catsuits, *Thin White Duke* tuxedos, Union Jack coat, and all.

Learn more about the incarnations of this Starman-turned-sophisticate with our primer to the retrospective—a guide to Bowie's wild, rule-flouting way of dress in all its glitzy ostentation. Perhaps you'll find your own inner rebel along the way.

GET THE LOOK



The Ziggy Stardust Era

Often clad in skintight jumpsuits, his lightening bolt-painted complexion accented by a flame red coiffure, Ziggy Stardust was nothing if not a vision. David Bowie's androgynous alter ego served as a rock savior for '70s disaffected youth, his accompanying concept album (*The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and Spiders from Mars*) the anthemic soundtrack to their discontent. It was as Ziggy that this once unassuming Brixton-born lad cemented his celebrity, the operatic music and ensembles of his second self earning Bowie a throng of devotees.

Finding sincerity in theatrics, Ziggy defied narrow definitions of sexuality, using the persona to titillate, rebel, and entertain. Fashion was at the heart of his exercise; Bowie borrowed the character's name from

that of a tailor shop and committed to the principle that "this whole thing [was] going to be about clothes."

Striped suits whose fit left little to the imagination, embroidered silk Edwardian blouses and jackets with exaggerated lapels constituted Ziggy's glam spaceman wardrobe. Accessories such as paisley-print foulards and platform boots grounded the Ziggy look in the era's key trends, while outlandish detailing such as pointed metallic shoulders offered a glimpse into the future—predating Balmain's now ubiquitous jacket silhouette. Donning attire influenced by both genders and different epochs, Bowie crafted costumes that were irrepressibly sexual and unmistakably Ziggy. And thus a rock idol was born.



GET THE LOOK



Burberry London



Paul Smith



Seven for all Mankind



Jil Sander



Soul Glamour and Surrealist Onscreen Style

Shedding the *Ziggy Stardust* guise but not his flair, Bowie's outward appearance evolved in tandem with his music. Slipping into suspenders and high-waisted trousers, plaid ties and fur-collared capes, the soulful subversive emerged post-Ziggy as an eclectic, yet slightly subdued version of his former self. *The Diamond Dogs* tour saw Bowie strutting onstage all pomp and circumstance in suits that were anything but buttoned up: think textured jackets paired

with plaid jumbo ties, and powder blue bell bottoms with boxy blazers to accompany them.

For the conceptual *Nicolas Roeg* film *The Man Who Fell to Earth* Bowie returned to the outer space preoccupations of the Ziggy era, but with focused sleekness. He graced the screen in plain fitted tees, laced leather corset belts, oversized military coats, and tinted sunglasses—an otherworldly, cooler than

DAVID BOWIE





Slickly Suited

With the release of 1976's *Station to Station*, Bowie's penchant for extravagance was harnessed as he introduced the world to the *Thin White Duke*. This embodiment saw Bowie pared down neo-Cabaret attire, the precise match for his minimalist new compositions. Clothed in a simple white oxford shirt, black vest and trousers and slicked back hair, the *Duke* reeked of lust as he crooned lines from his sultry song catalogue. Today, stars like Tilda Swinton—herself an androgynous sex symbol—reference this memorable period of Bowie's career, slipping on spare tuxedos by designers such as Jil Sander as they channel the Duke's charismatic ways.

DAVID BOWIE

GET THE LOOK





Sophisticated Starman

Subsequent decades brought Bowie unprecedented levels of stardom, owing to high profile collaborations and the palatable funk-dance offerings of albums like *Let's Dance* and *Tonight*. Riding through the '80s and '90s with a wardrobe of confident flamboyance, but never kitsch, the Bowie of our time seems to have fully discovered his personal style sans roleplay.

Adapting his previous fashion iterations for the modern age, Bowie now steps out in elongating cigarette trousers, skinny ties, and, on casual days, crisp dark

denim with fine knits and tweedy pea coats. "Fit" is the operative word, with Bowie settling for nothing less than flawless tailoring, whether going for haute evening style or dressed-down elegance.

And yet, while Bowie's most outlandish antics are behind him, there is always something of a raucous mischief-maker present in his rakish grin. Urbane, with just the right degree of fashion-forward showiness, this rock chameleon retains the soul of his inspired ex-stage personas in every faultless sartorial choice.

ALL THAT GLITTERS PLAYLIST

Get in the groove with glamtastic seventies sounds fit for a lameclad "It" girl!

"Lady Stardust" – David Bowie

David Bowie's sonic rock n' roll romance, this pivotal song off of *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars* is supposedly a musical homage to glam king Marc Bolan.

"Love is the Drug" – Roxy Music

A slinky glam-jam, this dance floor favorite from the troubadour of the glitter scene pontificates on the addictive properties of amorous encounters—and all with a playful, stompy beat.

"Dandy in the Underworld" – T-Rex

A psychedelic-infused track with typical T-Rex whimsy, swaying and pixie-like guitars make "Dandy in the Underworld" a classic favorite for Marc Bolan devotees.

"Sweet Jane" – Mott the Hoople

A glam-infused cover of the Velvet Underground classic, "Sweet Jane" from 1970's Brit-band Mott the Hoople adds a glitter-infused swagger, making this a go-to for dance floors from London to New York.

