



Bolan: The Rise and Fall of a 20th Century Superstar

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Exploring the making - and undoing - of the self-styled 20th century boy Marc Bolan, this book provides a portrait of a pop obsessive, a chameleon whose remarkable life allows us to explore the subterranean worlds he inhabited.

Bolan: The Rise and Fall of a 20th Century Superstar Details

Date : Published September 1st 2006 by Omnibus Press (first published 2003)

ISBN : 9781846091476

Author : Mark Paytress

Format : Paperback 408 pages

Genre : Music, Biography, Nonfiction



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From Reader Review Bolan: The Rise and Fall of a 20th Century Superstar for online ebook

Christian Lipski says

A very comprehensive history of Bolan. Doesn't shy away from his shortcomings and flaws, which is welcome. Input from the people in his life provides much needed detail. I loved knowing what was happening behind the scenes of some of my favorite albums.

Paytress does include little subjective comments from time to time, which seems odd (like his description of Cheech and Chong as "unfunny" - not very professional). He's perhaps a bit too charitable with the musical quality of Marc's later work for my taste, but to each their own.

As a whole, though, a thorough look at this superstar.

Tosh says

Marc Bolan and T.Rex were very much part of my teen years. Marc Bolan represented a foreign force (from the U.K.) that made one realize that there was something "out" out there. I dug the catchy aspect of his idiotic lyrics, but when sung by him, was pure poetry on (almost) highest level. But then David Bowie came on the scene and totally tore the T.Rex need out of my life. But many years later I have come back to the sound of T.Rex and realize what a remarkable and eccentric talent he was.

Mark Paytress wrote a really good biography on the man, the music world at the time, and why Marc Bolan and T.Rex are important. In the U.K. he ruled the country, but only for two years or so. After that he was struggling to get his crown back. But David Bowie pretty much took the crown and not only that, he was not going to give up the jewel hat. Bowie was at the time (and still is) very much a genius and an exceptional songwriter on top of that. Bolan, had his brilliance and his moment, but couldn't really repeat that moment. But the beauty of Bolan's work is not the grand gesture, but the small paint strokes that he made with respect to his music and records. Especially the Tony Visconti produced recordings. Which are brilliant. Both Visconti and Bolan added textures to rather minimal rocking tracks. But there is also the melodies - and Bolan I think is really strong in that department. And a classic T.Rex track had that Sun records sound, but it sounds like it was recorded on the planet Saturn.

The Bolan story is a sad one. The typical rock n' roll drugs, drink, and dry up of talent. And of course the tragic car accident. But the classic T.Rex (Marc Bolan) record is one to marvel at, because it is a moment or a series of moments that are perfect.

James Gent says

The story of how Mark Feld of Stoke Newington became Marc Bolan of the Ballrooms of Mars. A detailed, honest, informed biography.

Michelle Kato says

Fall????

The Electric Warrior's star shines on! His music, videos, poetry, couture, personality, and that face!!!!!! Marc Bolan, The Prettiest Star!

Jen says

This book was interesting and I learned a lot not just about Marc Bolan and T. Rex, but about the whole 70s British music scene. I guess I wasn't ready to see Marc Bolan for who he really was though. Not knowing much about his personality beforehand, it threw me a bit.

minnie says

Excellent biography brilliantly researched ,honest and portrays Marc asintelligent ambitious and utterly charming 'til he hit the cocaine of course!

Maj says

I got this book because I kept bumping into Bolan in connection with some of my favourite artists for many years now, grew fond of some of his songs but had only little knowledge about his life story, apart from his tragic demise. I can tell Paytress did a great job researching, even if my prior knowledge was not deep. He quotes a lot, lets people with different points of view talk etc. The book gave me insight into both Bolan's music and life, his personality. It does not paint Marc in the best light but compared to the number of musician biographies I've read before, this light is not so much a result of a bias as it seems to be the result of trying to be objective.

I personally would have welcomed a deeper dive into Marc's music. I didn't come out of the book wanting to get any of Marc's albums or at least songs that I don't already have. On the other hand Visconti's quote about Marc wanting to be both a star and a musician, but unfortunately mostly just a star kind of explains why the emphasis could not lie on Marc's musical body of work.

All in all a good biography, a good read, definitely could recommend it to people with little prior knowledge of Marc and his life. Don't think it was a bad starting point for me.

