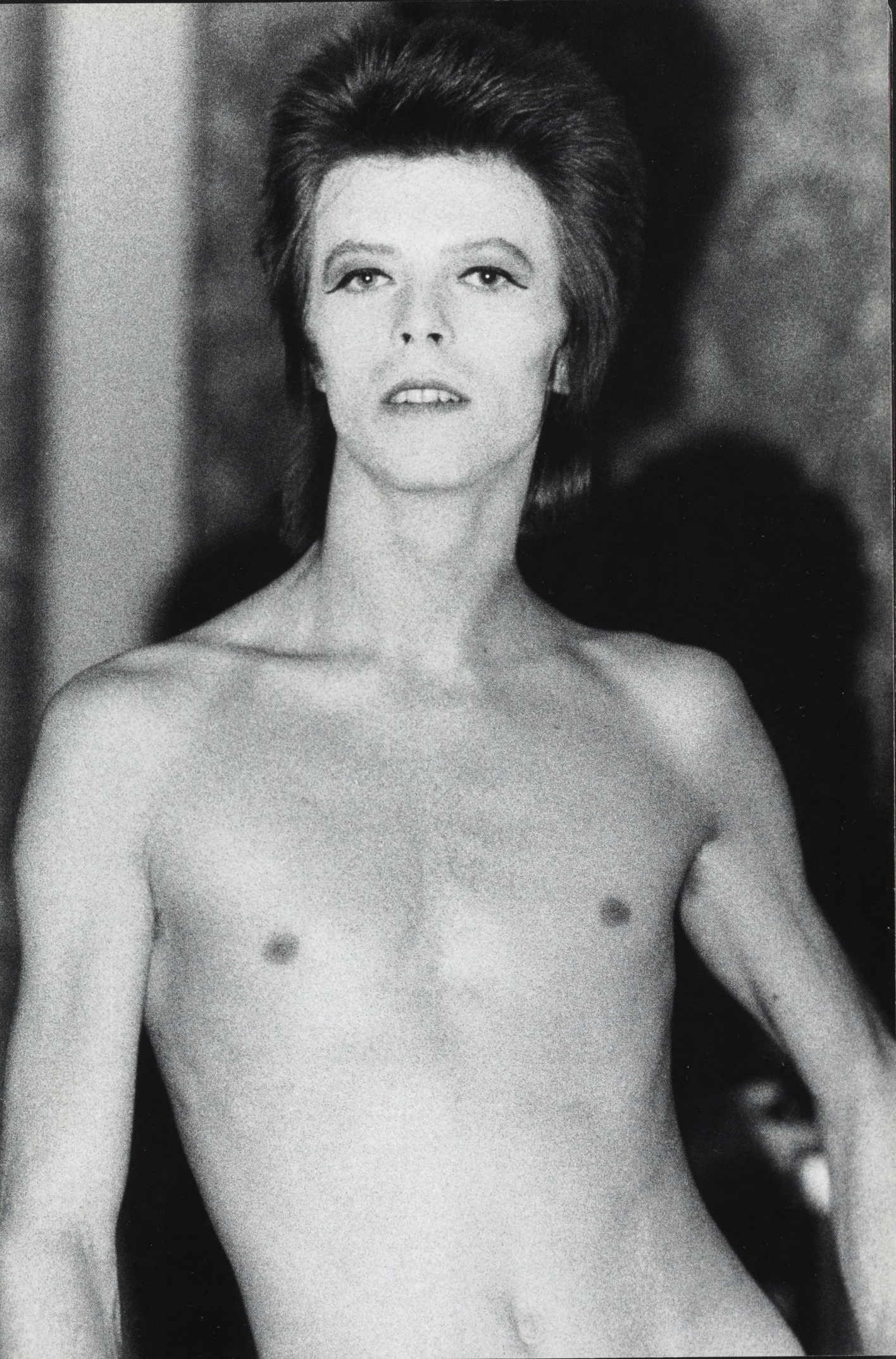


The background of the page features large, stylized letters. The letter 'B' is rendered in a thick, black, serif font. Behind it, the letter 'O' is shown in a red, sans-serif font. This 'BO' pair is repeated twice, once on the left and once on the right, creating a symmetrical, graphic design that frames the central text.

david
bowie

“So I turned myself
to face me
But I’ve never
caught a glimpse
Of how the others
must see the faker
I’m much too fast
to take that test
Ch-ch-ch-changes.”
—From David Bowie’s
“Changes”

The beautiful irony of



Holiday Inn®



David Bowie's revolutionary career is that he has bent rock & roll convention in so many imaginative and contradictory ways during the last quarter century that he has left many pop observers asking themselves if he was ever really a rock & roller at all.

It's one thing for an

artist to move between musical genres — in Bowie's case, from the radical art-rock edges of *Ziggy Stardust* to the anxious soul strains of *Young Americans* to the icy techno rock of *Low*. But this English singer/songwriter didn't simply explore musical genres. In the

tradition of artists like Frank Sinatra and Judy Garland, who both moved freely between various artistic disciplines, Bowie employed a creative playing field that reached to Hollywood and, ultimately, to Broadway, where he starred in *The Elephant Man*.

"I have complete sympathy with anyone who says, 'Well, what exactly is he?'" Bowie has said of his own career direction. "He sort of does a bit of this and a bit of that." There's the suspicion that anyone who hops around like that doesn't have a real sort of love for any of it very much."

To Bowie, the important thing was never defining career boundaries; it was about maximizing artistic pursuits. While he occasionally shifted direction too frequently for his own good, Bowie produced some of the most probing and affecting music of the modern pop era. Writing

about the scary monsters in his own life in a society that was re-examining its values, Bowie foreshadowed almost every important trend in pop – from the gender-bending confusion of the glitter era to the soul-searching alienation of '90s rock. Prince, Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor and the late Kurt Cobain are among the artists who have saluted Bowie's influence.

Born David Robert Jones in London on Jan. 8, 1947, Bowie – who adopted his stage name to avoid being mistaken for the Monkees' Davy Jones – developed interests in art and music as a youngster. He began recording in the mid-'60s, eventually exhibiting enough notoriety and promise in England to be called everything from “the Oscar Wilde of rock” to “the Elvis Presley of the '70s.”

By the time of his wonderfully varied *Hunky Dory* album in 1971, Bowie was attracting interest in America. In his landmark *Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars* album and tour of 1972, Bowie challenged sexual and social attitudes with a force that wouldn't be seen again until Prince arrived on the scene almost a decade later.

For those who are confused by his creative crisscrossing, Bowie has been willing to serve as a guide through his own colorful history.

About *Hunky Dory*, Bowie has said: “There was a feeling of optimism and enthusiasm in the album that reflected my thinking at the time. There's even a song [“Song for Bob Dylan”] that laid out what I wanted to do in rock. It was at that period where I said, ‘OK [Dylan], if you don't want to do it, I will.’ I saw that leadership void. If there wasn't someone who was going to use rock & roll, then I'd do it.”

Ziggy Stardust was Bowie's attempt to fill the void – and it was a massively important work, one that seemed to speak of the obsession with stardom and the rock experience from the perspective of both the performer and the audience.

Bowie became so personally involved in rock's fast-lane excesses in the early and mid-'70s that he eventually had to withdraw almost totally from the pop scene to recover his emotional bal-

ance. He went to Berlin with producer Brian Eno and made three albums, *Low*, *Heroes* and *Lodger*, that explored, with a chilling detachment, the dark recesses of the soul.

Rejuvenated personally, Bowie devoted much of the early and mid-'80s to the lighter *Let's Dance* pop bounce, earning him his greatest commercial success. But this restless artist was not comforted for long by mainstream acceptance, and he startled the pop world in 1990 by vowing to stop doing his old hits in concert.

Reuniting in the studio in 1995 with Eno, Bowie made an album, *Outside*, that shoved him back into adventurous rock terrain, and he presented the music live in a daring series of shows with Reznor, a '90s artist with Bowie-esque vision and impact.

“It was a way [for me to] start fresh in the '90s,” Bowie said of his decision to stop performing his early material. “As long as [the old hits] were around, they made it very safe for me, because I could always fall back on them. By saying goodbye to the songs, however, I am forcing myself to depend on the new songs. I know that's a bit of a suicide mission if I don't write new songs over the next few years, but it forces you to move forward.”

On the new album and tour, Bowie has indeed lived up to his own legacy and moved on – just as he has helped rock itself move on for almost 30 years.

If the radical changes in Bowie's personas and musical direction have confused many pop observers for much of those 30 years, his induction tonight into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame should make his contributions clear to everyone. Besides producing marvelous and inspiring music, the most important figures in rock also have set a standard for young musicians to measure themselves against. For decades these standards have been forged by the inductees – from Elvis Presley and Chuck Berry to Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix – enshrined by the Hall of Fame. David Bowie now takes his rightful place among them. —Robert Hilburn



Opposite page: Bowie in the gown he wore to shock DJs and promo men on his first trip to America. **This page (from top):** With saxophone, an instrument he plays very well indeed; the early tousled look; observing “street people” for fashion inspiration.

