

A youngish, '50s Bowie displays a serene edge

Concert review

DAVID BOWIE and DJ KAMIKAZE, last night at the Paramount Theatre.

By PATRICK MACDONALD
Seattle Times staff critic

That David Bowie fellow has finally gotten all that foolishness out of his system!

Transforming himself once again, rock's original chameleon opened his latest American tour (after one show in Vancouver, B.C.) with a spectacular retrospective/greatest-hits show delivered with sustained energy and supremely confident showmanship.

Now 50, but looking 15 years younger, with short, spiked, blond-highlighted hair and a thin goatee, Bowie — the most outrageous, daring superstar of 1970s rock — was less flashy than he's ever been in a Seattle performance.

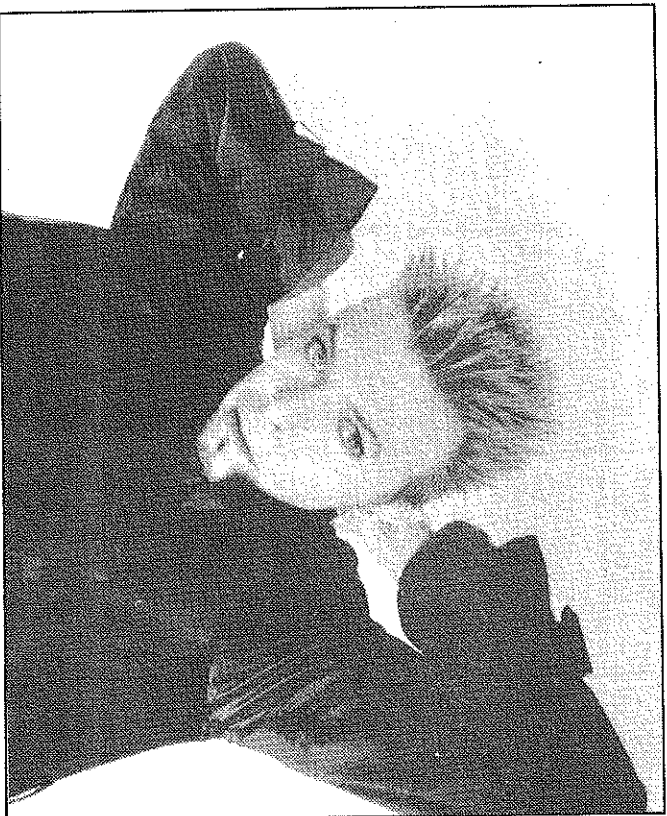
I couldn't help but think of his landmark Ziggy Stardust show on the same stage 25 years ago, when his spacey makeup, revealing costumes and sexually suggestive actions were

shocking and cutting edge.

With nearly 30 years experience as a rock star, including the glory years of Beatles-like popularity in England and arena tours in America, he's finally reached a kind of rock-idol serenity — still vital but with all the sharp edges, all the nervous energy, smoothed away.

He seemed calmer and more together than during the high-profile round of performances and publicity surrounding his 50th birthday earlier this year — when he sometimes seemed a little desperate to look and sound contemporary and hip. His new stuff still sounds modern, with techno/jungle/industrial influences, but he no longer tries to look the part of a '90s superfreak.

Backed by a talented, experienced four-piece band, and supported by an overly glitzy, at times annoying lighting system (flashing white airport-runway strobes in your eyes lose their novelty mighty quick), Bowie balanced his newer material with plenty of classics, some of them reworked but all delivered with force and pride.



Rock star David Bowie performed at Seattle's Paramount Theatre last night.

NINA SCHULIZ

He reached all the way back to 1970 for "The Man Who Sold the World," giving it a reggae spin, and also featured a bluesy "Jean Genie" (sequed from "Baby What You Want Me to Do"), a straightforward "Panic in Detroit," a thickly-textured "Fashion" and a hyperdriven "Look Back in Anger."

His nearly two-hour set also featured "Under Pressure," "Scary

Monsters and Super Creeps" and "Pame," about detailing aspects of his career, as well as the Velvet Underground's "White Light/White Heat" and a concluding "All the Young Dudes," which he wrote for Mott the Hoople.

Most of the newer songs were from his latest "Earthling" album, his best in many years, including "Seven Years in Tibet," "Looking for Satel-

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lites," "I'm Afraid of Americans" and "Little Wonder." He also did the alternative-influenced "The Heart's Filthy Lesson" from his 1995 "Outside" album.

Bowie was backed by his long-time guitarist Reeves Gabrels, as well as bassist/keyboardist Gail Ann Dorsey (who performed Laurie Anderson's "Superman"), keyboardist Mike Garson and drummer Zachary Alford.

The show was opened with an hour of recorded disc-jockey music from locally-based DJ Kamikaze.

The Paramount displayed its new versatility, with the main floor cleared of seating (they fold down under the floor), and reserved seating in the balcony.

Bowie rocks

A review of the pop star's concert at the Paramount.
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