

## Classy Bowie buries Ziggy, historic past with 'Sound + Vision' tour in Houston

By JOHN RIGHTER  
Of The Battalion Staff

Ch-ch-ch-changes. Drawing the final signature on an era of musical excellence, David Bowie, alias Ziggy Stardust, alias Aladdin Sane, alias Thin White Duke, paid his last respects in classic style Thursday night in Houston.

Performing to the sold out Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, Bowie laid off the glitter, but lost none of his legendary pizzazz, in sending off twenty-five years of historic recordings.

Bowie is not retiring from the music industry, but he fervently swears that the promotional tour for last year's *Sound + Vision* collection on Rykodisc is the last time he will perform any of his past catalogue. Whether he can keep that promise remains to be seen, but assuming it's Tin Machine (his current group) from here on out, Thursday's performance of greatest hits couldn't have been better.

I've always held greatest-hits tours in high contempt. If a band is so insecure of their newer material (i.e. the Rolling Stones and the Who) that they must bury a token single or two from their recent recordings and shower the Pavlov-trained audience with greatest hits, then they have no business being on the road.

Bowie's performance transcended this routine of hit after hit. For him it was more of a burial ceremony that can be desecrated only by renegeing on his historic promise, in which case I curse the whole thing.

Opening with his three most enduring singles ("Space Oddity," "Changes" and "Rebel, Rebel"), Bowie spent little effort in enrapturing and sustaining the 10,000-plus audience. "Space Oddity" was particularly amazing, with a sequestered Bowie flanked by a gigantic black-and-white image of himself — via a projector on a mesh screen across the front of the stage.

It was the projected Bowie that drew the audience's attention, peering over the stage in several choreographed poses and outfits, while singing in synchronized fashion with the silhouetted Bowie onstage.

The large projections were an impressive use of multi-media images



David Bowie stands in front of his alter-ego, Ziggy Stardust

that were made even more valuable in light of the outdoor confines.

The screen projected images of Bowie and a blond, female dancer, both together and alone, throughout the show. Especially impressive was the screen's dramatic use during "Space Oddity," "Ashes To Ashes" and "Fame."

Bowie also implemented three smaller screens stationed above and to the sides of the stage's mesh screening (which was only down when images were projected onto it — about half the show). The smaller screens displayed both recorded images of Bowie and live shots of Bowie and his supporting band.

Apart from the visuals, it was all Bowie. After the tumultuous experience with the extravagant "Glass Spider" tour of three years ago, Bowie seemed more at ease and in sync

with the show's less dramatic, stripped-down production.

His job was made even easier by his accompanying cast (guitarist Adrian Belew, bassist Erdal Kizilcay, keyboardist Rick Fox and drummer Michael Hodges). Belew, former singer and guitarist for King Crimson, was especially impressive, taking his role to improvise freely on lead guitar (Bowie added some rhythm guitar during the performance).

Following in the tradition of other outstanding Bowie complements such as Stevie Ray Vaughn, Robert Fripp and Peter Frampton, Belew's creative spark added flair to the evening, particularly during "Stay," "Fame," "Fashion" and "Station To Station" (a guitarist's dream song for improv).

As payment, Bowie teamed with

Belew on Belew's current single, "Pretty Pink Rose," a song they wrote and performed together.

My only complaints with Bowie's performance were the lack of obscure singles chosen and a surprisingly subpar encore.

Breaking his performance into two 50-minute sets, I figured the first set and the encore would be heavy on hits, and the second set would feature a greater portion of his lesser known, but equally attractive singles.

Apart from "Stay," "Queen Bitch," "Station To Station" and "Life On Mars," Bowie performed all hits. Of course, there are many who would argue that even the hit singles were not inclusive enough, neglecting such gems as "Golden Years," "John, I'm Only Dancing," "Aladdin Sane" and "Starman."

Still, being this is the last time (theoretically) to hear him perform any of his early material, I was disappointed not to hear something like "Panic In Detroit," "Up The Hill Backwards" or "What In The World."

The encore was also disappointing. Most likely this was the result of an oversaturation of hits, leaving no punches for the finish. A drawn out "Jean Genie," (which I've never considered to be one of Bowie's better singles) interpolated by the Them's "Gloria" and a shabby offering of "Modern Love," closed the night out.

Unfortunately, Bowie chose not to end the evening with "Rock-n-Roll Suicide," the perfect closer. Bowie even teased the audience (at least me) by leaving a lone spotlight on the stage for several minutes after the band had departed.

It will be interesting to see and hear the future changes and directions of David Bowie, one of the first real rock-n-roll innovators. My guess is that he won't stay with Tin Machine too long. The punk image and band-member rigidity don't fit him (nor does the beard).

I just hope that the "Sound + Vision" tour is the final resting ground for these songs and that Bowie maintains an integrity sacrificed too easily by many of his '60s and '70s brethren.

If so, he couldn't have ended it better.

## Boring 'Another 48 Hours' replays jokes of original film, hindered by lackluster script

By DON ATKINSON JR.  
Of The Battalion Staff

Watching "Another 48 Hours" is like having someone tell you the same joke over and over again for two hours.

It would be hard to describe this movie as a sequel because it's almost a complete recreation of the original film. Everything from the original "48 Hours" is here: Reggie Hammond (Eddie Murphy) singing "Roxanne" while a walkman blares in his ears, a barroom brawl, psycho killers and enough off-color language to make your average sailor blush.

In fact, the only thing missing from "Another 48 Hours" is the wit and humor that made the original so enjoyable.

With the exception of a few good chuckles, there is not a single sustained laugh in the entire movie. "Another 48 Hours" is so predictable that you can see the lame jokes coming a mile away. Everybody in the film, especially Murphy, seems to be straining to get a laugh.

A lot of things happen in "Another 48 Hours" that are supposed to be funny, but the laughs just never materialize. Perhaps that is why Murphy keeps trying to remind us again and again that this is a funny movie.

Example: "I've had a very bad day," he shouts. "I just got out of jail, my car got blown up, this guy has all my money..." And then later on: "My car got blown up, a bus flipped over on me, I got shot at..."

Yeah, yeah.

If it all sounds a bit excessive, that's because it is. Even the action

scenes are so overdone it's ridiculous.

A good example is the aforementioned bus crash. The vehicle shot up, flips over several times, hit by an 18-wheeler, then flips again. Even though Murphy's character, Hammond, is standing in the bus when all this happens, emerges without even a wrinkle in his suit.

It isn't just the good guys who apparently are indestructible. Two of the psycho killers get their gun battle, fire about 200 shots out reloading, then jump out a window, fall four stories (I'm making this up), land in a garbage bin, get on their motorcycles, drive through two walls, a window, other wall, a movie screen (land perfectly in the middle of the aisle) and then through two doors.

Guess what? They get away. Things also happen in "Another 48 Hours" that don't make sense. Like when Jack Cates (Nolte) gets suspended from the police force, and nobody bothers to take his gun and badge away from him until the movie is almost over. Further, Cates is charged with a slaughter and gets into several shootouts later on, but he never gets arrested.

There is only one reason "Another 48 Hours" got made. Studio executives somewhere were more money.

Do yourself a favor and don't go to it. If you want to spend money, go rent the original "48 Hours" instead. It won't cost as much as a movie ticket, and you'll get to see a talented cast performing at their best.

## Outdoor Pavilion offers comfortable surroundings, diverse performances with initial Houston season

By JOHN RIGHTER  
Of The Battalion Staff

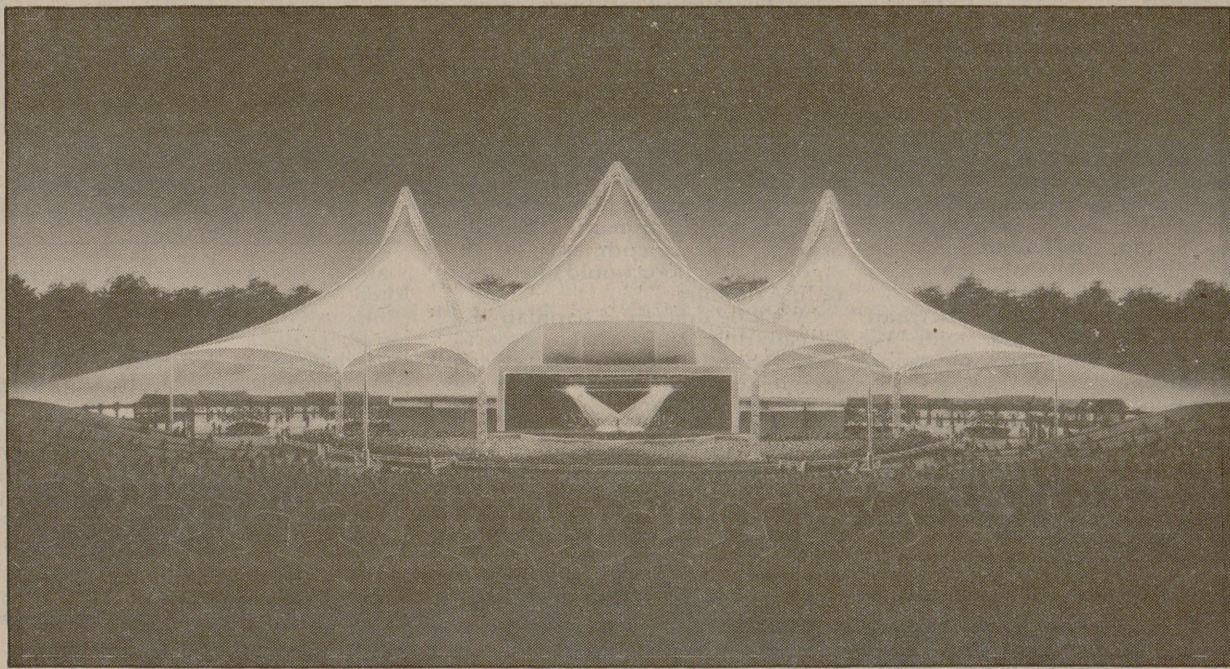
The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion in The Woodlands is concert luxury to the fullest. Compared to the downtrodden Summit, Sam Houston Coliseum/Music Hall and the Astrodome, the Pavilion is a welcome addition for either the sophisticated or the infrequent Houston music goer.

The \$9-million venue was built to provide a seasonal (April through October) venue for the Houston Symphony, touring arts and Broadway performances, and the best in "acceptable" contemporary concerts (acceptable since the Pavilion is situated smack dab in the middle of The Woodlands — an enormous residential area).

Designed in the style of other major outdoor pavilions such as Wolf Trap, near Washington, D.C.; Tanglewood, near Boston; and Concord, near San Francisco; the Pavilion is the latest step in the rise of the Houston's arts and entertainment community.

The Pavilion's diversity is apparent with its list of first-season acts. Frank Sinatra, Alabama, David Bowie, Depeche Mode, the Houston Symphony Orchestra, the Judds, Stevie Ray Vaughn and the JZ Jazz Festival are a sample of the scheduled performances for this summer.

The outdoor arena's seating capacity is divided into two sections. A reserved seating section for 3,000 is protected by a 37,000 square-foot roof. Beyond the reserved seating is an expansive lawn that seats an addi-



The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion

Battalion File Photo

tional 7,000.

Performance wise, the 60-by-100 foot stage is more than adaptable with a 60-foot high fly loft for lights and sound equipment. And, surprisingly, the acoustics are very sharp for an outdoor venue.

Also convenient is the facility's easy access, though once you arrive

it's a long hike to the front gates. At best, you're in for a half a mile walk.

The parking is inconvenient in comparison to the Summit or Astrodome, not benefiting from a single, organized parking area. Instead, the Pavilion utilizes several lots situated throughout The Woodlands.

The outdoor trade off for the

Woodland's scenic-forest surroundings (the Pavilion is engulfed by foliage) is the summer's extreme humidity. Little relief is available from the heat before sunset. Also suspect is the event of a rainstorm, in which case the Pavilion says all performances are still go, without refunds. Mother nature could be a bitch for customers sitting on the uncovered lawn this summer.

The Pavilion is perfect (in good weather) for the clientele and events it purports to attract. Its safe, clean surroundings will more than satisfy the luxurious and the timid. As for being a commendable rock venue (not its full purpose), I'll take something more worn and breakable like the Summit, or better yet, the Axion.

The Pavilion can be reached from College Station by taking Highway 6 to Navasota. At Navasota exit onto 105 East, to Conroe. Stay on 105 until you reach I-45 South. Take I-45 South. The Pavilion is accessed from Research Forest Drive off I-45 in The Woodlands.

## Pianist Simon thrills in chamber concert

By TODD STONE  
Of The Battalion Staff

Acclaimed pianist Abbey Simon highlighted the second performance of Chamber Music Concerts at Rudder Theatre. The chamber series is part of the Texas Music Festival, and it is sponsored by the Brazos Valley Humana Hospital and Texas A&M College of Liberal Arts.

This summer's series theme, "Brahms and his times," focuses on composers from the romantic movement of the 19th century.

For concert pianist fans, Simon's performance of "Fantasia in C Major" by Robert Schumann was a treat. I enjoyed Simon's meticulous playing of the softer, introspective moments of the piece.

Concert enthusiasts may get a rush from a pianist's fast and flashy playing, but Simon's effort to achieve the perfect tone should be appreciated as well.

Simon was appreciated. The audience acknowledged his disciplined effort by applauding the performance at two different times when "Fantasia" seemed to end. But Simon wasn't finished, and the applause was not a compliment, rather an interruption.

Unfortunately, the program did not list "Fantasia" as a multi-movement piece. The audience naturally interpreted the pause between movements as endings.

I admit that I was confused since I had never heard "Fantasia." But I have a rule to help novices of orchestral performances — Never applaud until the pianist rests his arms at his sides, which signals the end of the

piece. Once the performer tells the audience can do hand stunts if they want.

To Simon's credit, he didn't seem to let the applause distract him, and he returned to the stage for two encore performances — "Prelude in G# Minor" by Rachmaninoff and "Etude in F Major" by Chopin.

"Etude" was a flashy piece that was written to show off a pianist's technique. "Prelude" was an interesting selection because Rachmaninoff is generally known for music he wrote during this century. However, "Prelude" was written in the late 19th century so the theme of the series was contradicted.

The performance began with four romantic pieces for two violins and viola by Antonin Dvorak. The pieces were uplifting, and enjoyed the perfect timing, playing and teamwork of violinists David and Linda Cerone of the Cleveland Musical Institute and violinist Kenneth Goldsmith.

An intermission followed Simon's performance of "Fantasia" and he returned with the Cerones, Lawrence Wheeler (violin) and David Tomatz (cello) to perform "Quintet in F Minor" by Johannes Brahms.

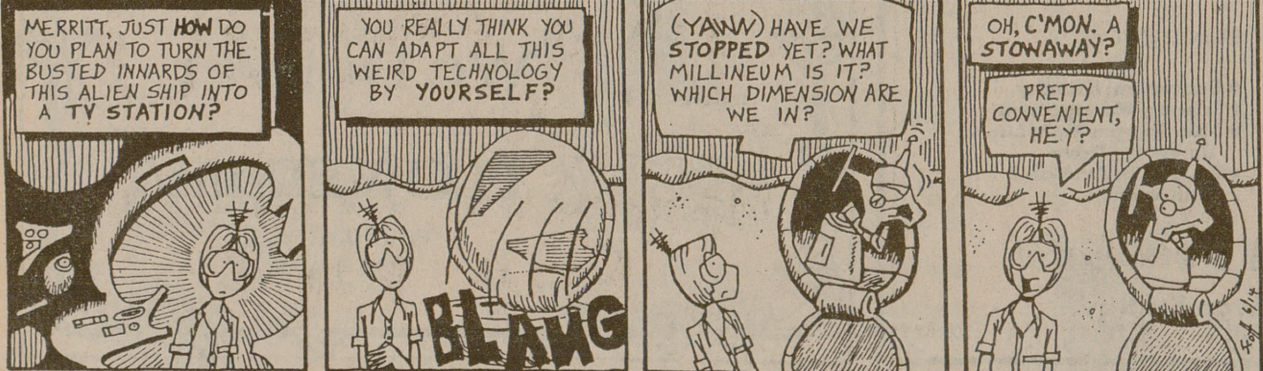
This four-part piece featured a lively introduction and a moderate second part that led into a fast Scherzo (dance), before a serene ending.

"Quintet in F Minor" is just a great piece of music, and playing couldn't have been better. As a matter of fact, the same could be said about the entire show.



Abbey Simon performed Monday at Rudder Theater

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