



Shock and Awe: Glam Rock and Its Legacy, from the Seventies to the Twenty-first Century

By Simon Reynolds

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From the acclaimed author of *Rip It Up and Start Again* and *Retromania*—“the foremost popular music critic of this era (*Times Literary Supplement*)”—comes the definitive cultural history of glam and glitter rock, celebrating its outlandish fashion and outrageous stars, including David Bowie and Alice Cooper, and tracking its vibrant legacy in contemporary pop.

Spearheaded by David Bowie, Alice Cooper, T. Rex, and Roxy Music, glam rock reveled in artifice and spectacle. Reacting against the hairy, denim-clad rock bands of the late Sixties, glam was the first true teenage rampage of the new decade. In *Shock and Awe*, Simon Reynolds takes you on a wild cultural tour through the early Seventies, a period packed with glitzy costumes and alien make-up, thrilling music and larger-than-life personas.

Shock and Awe offers a fresh, in-depth look at the glam and glitter phenomenon, placing it in the wider Seventies context of social upheaval and political disillusion. It explores how artists like Lou Reed, New York Dolls, and Queen broke with the hippie generation, celebrating illusion and artifice over truth and authenticity. Probing the genre’s major themes—stardom, androgyny, image, decadence, fandom, apocalypse—Reynolds tracks glam’s legacy as it unfolded in subsequent decades, from Eighties art-pop icons like Kate Bush through to twenty-first century idols of outrage such as Lady Gaga. *Shock and Awe* shows how the original glam artists’ obsessions with fame, extreme fashion, and theatrical excess continue to reverberate through contemporary pop culture.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

The Glitter. The THEATRICALS. The EXCESS. The Music.

The true story of the gender-bending artists who changed rock and roll.

Simon Reynolds has been hailed as “the foremost popular music critic of this era” (*Times Literary Supplement* [UK]), “unassailable” (*New York Times*), and “the most provocative pop music writer of his generation” (*Boston Globe*). Now, the acclaimed author of *Rip It Up and Start Again* and *Retromania* delivers the definitive cultural history of glam and glitter rock, celebrating its outlandish fashion and outrageous stars and tracking its vibrant legacy in contemporary pop.

Reacting against the drab, denim-clad long-hair bands of the hippie era, glam rock was the first true teenage rampage of the Seventies. Pioneered by **David Bowie, Alice Cooper, T. Rex, New York Dolls** and **Roxy Music**, this new look and sound reveled in artifice and spectacle over earnestness and authenticity. In *Shock and Awe*, Simon Reynolds takes you on a deeply researched and wildly entertaining cultural tour through the glam explosion—a period defined by glitzy costumes and alien makeup, thrilling music, and larger-than-life personas.

Shock and Awe offers a fresh look at the glam phenomenon, placing it in the context of the era’s social upheaval and political disillusion. Probing the genre’s major themes—fame, androgyny, decadence, apocalypse—Reynolds traces glam’s influence as it reverberates across subsequent decades, from art-pop aesthetes like **Kate Bush, Prince** and **Morrissey** in the Eighties to contemporary pop icons such as **Lady Gaga, Nicki Minaj** and **Beyoncé**. *Shock and Awe* reveals how the original glam artists’ obsessions and provocations continue to ripple through our culture today.

About the Author

Simon Reynolds started his journalistic career in 1986 as a staff writer for the British weekly music paper *Melody Maker*. His writing has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Spin*, *Village Voice*, *Rolling Stone*, *Artforum*, *The Wire*, *The Guardian*, *Slate*, *Frieze* and the *Los Angeles Times*. He is the author of four books and five collections of essays and interviews. His books have been translated into ten languages. Born in London, he now lives in Los Angeles with his wife and children.

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April Hanson:

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