The return of the Thin White Duke

David Bowie in concert at Sullivan Stadium, Foxboro, Massachusetts, Wednesday, August 31.

With the release of each album and the onset of each tour, David Bowie has provided the public with a new persona to ponder, be it the proto-punk Ziggy Stardust, the icy, alienated Thin White Duke, or the Man Who Fell to Earth. Bowie was wont to proclaim each new identity as his "real self," but it was his performance last night that finally revealed the man behind all the masks: David Bowie, the confident, consummate rock and roller.

The concert began with a portentous omen: the rain that threatened to ruin the show stopped as soon as Bowie stepped on stage. He launched the band into a frenetic version of "Look Back in Anger," which immediately segued into "Heroes," his tale of star-crossed lovers who meet at the Berlin Wall. The one-two punch of the opener set the tone for the remainder of the show, in which Bowie concentrated on his middle period and recent recordings.

Due to the last-minute cancellation on the part of white-kid guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan, the lead guitar slot was filled by former Bowie sideman Earl Slick, who was prominently featured on the Station to Station album. Consequently, a large portion of the two-hour-plus set was drawn from Station material. Slick surpassed all expectations with his brilliant sustained solo intro to that album's title tune.

Much of the show's impact arose from Bowie's sense of programming and timing. "Fashion," his commentary on dance-floor antics, was followed by a searing version of "Let's Dance," in which the horn section (which featured the venerable Lenny Pickett of Tower of Power) provided the perfect, driving rhythmic foil for the fills and antics of the lead singer. Bassist Carmine Rojas, guitarist Carlos Alomar, and drummer Tony Thompson provided the perfect, driving groove. Tina Turner provided the perfect, driving groove.

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The 1983 Boston Rock 'n' Roll Rumble winners "To Tuesday" will be performing their special brand of synth-pop at Jonathan Swift's in Harvard Square, Saturday, September 3.

The MIT Musical Theatre Guild presents The Barber's Shop, with performances on Fri. & Sat., Sept. 2-3, 9:30, 10, 15, 16, 17 at 8:00 pm, and Sun., Sept. 4 & 10 at 3:30 pm, in the Kresge Little Theatre. Tickets are $5/$3 with MIT ID. For reservations call 253-6980.

The Magic Flute, The Last Metro, and Francois Truffault's Autumn Sonata will be showing Fri.-Sat., Sept. 2-3; and Ingmar Bergman's The Man from the US, A., starring James Dean, Alfred Hitchcock, Superman, and George Simms provide Bowie with a director's chair, cape, sunglasses, and a skull to serenade, only to snatch them away as the lyrics told of The Actor's decline.

Credit is also due to the band, understandably the finest ensemble Bowie has chosen to back him. Bassist Carmine Rojas, guitarist Carlos Alomar, and drummer Tony Thompson provided the perfect, driving rhythmic foil for the fills and antics of the horn section (which featured the venerable Lenny Pickett of Tower of Power). At several points Bowie gracefully yielded the stage to the players, allowing them to display their considerable musical prowess.

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