

T. REX

GET IT ON



THE COLLECTION

It's hard to understand genius. Much of the time it's even tougher to appreciate it. And so often that's because it's all about potential unfulfilled. There are those talents who operate across different parameters to the rest of us. These people often decry their own artistry, because to embrace it is to almost be overwhelmed – so what we get is a frustratingly incomplete picture. Such is the case with Marc Bolan.

Bolan started Tyrannosaurus Rex in 1967, after a brief involvement with John's Children. A pop/art style band with psychedelic leanings, the latter are probably best known for the song 'Desdemona' (written by Bolan) being banned by the BBC. Tyrannosaurus Rex did one gig as a four-piece, before Bolan decided that this wasn't working and, with Steve Peregrine Took on percussion, they became a duo. Their folk-inspired, neo-romantic leanings soon gained

There's a haunting quality to songs like 'Mustang Ford' that retains an allure even now. It made it to Number 15 in the UK charts, proof there was interest in their approach.

This affinity with folk music, whilst also recognising what was going on in the contemporary underground scene, is also obvious on the band's second album 'Prophets, Seers & Sages: The Angels Of The Ages' (again released in '68).

wider audience. Although neither sold brilliantly when first released, they were packaged together in 1972 under the title of 'Tyrannosaurus Rex: A Beginning', and went to the top of the charts. Third album 'Unicorn' (1969) was to mark the end of the relationship between Bolan and Peregrine Took, with the latter leaving. But in many ways, this is the most satisfying album of the Tyrannosaurus Rex era. There's an

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A restive, almost furtive character, from a distance of nearly four decades, one now gets the impression that, such was his own self-doubt he took refuge in efforts to become commercially successful. He succeeded to such an extent that many of his songs, through T. Rex, have become iconic to the glam rock of the era, and blueprints for what followed.. And yet it was so much of his earlier work, before he became an idol for millions and prisoner to the vampiric ravages of living up to the demands of the media that should define him.

the fledgling band a cult following. John Peel was a particularly big supporter of the young duo, often ferrying them to gigs in his own car. Peel even appeared on the band's 1968 debut album, the strikingly titled 'My People Were Fair And Had Sky In Their Hair...But Now They're Content To Wear Stars On Their Brows' (he read a Bolan fairy tale at the end of the record). What sets this album apart from so much that was going on at the time was a way in which the pair conspire to create a psychedelic atmosphere through an almost acoustic environment.

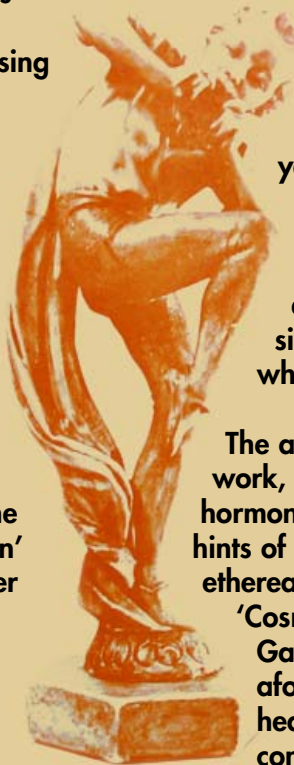
The likes of 'Stacey Grove' and 'Juniper Suction' tell of a growing force on the music scene, one that would refuse to be curtailed by the necessities of chart success. Bolan was clearly opening his mind to lyrical influences that went beyond the norm of the age – and the titles of these first two albums (whilst almost incomprehensible) have a rhythm and imagery which helped to give life to the young guitarist/vocalist's artistic dreams. It was to be the enormous glam success of T. Rex just a few years later that gained both albums a

elegance and elegiac quality to songs like 'Cat Black (The Wizard's Hat)' and 'Warlord Of The Royal Crocodiles' that told of Bolan's lyrical expressiveness moving ever more into being poetry in its own right. Beautifully produced by Tony Visconti (who had been ever present in the studio with the duo since their debut), it reached Number 12 in the UK charts.

The next year, Bolan and new percussive collaborator Mickey Finn released the final album in the Tyrannosaurus Rex cycle,

this being 'A Beard Of Stars'. It was notable because for the first time Bolan used electric instruments, as he began to explore fresh musical territory. But the same baroque feel was still there on songs like the title track, at least in atmosphere, and the album peaked at Number 21 in Britain. However, it was clear that things were changing. With an increasing momentum, Bolan was moving into a more accessible direction, and this became more transparent when the band name was shortened to T. Rex.

Bolan claimed this was his idea, although there are some who believe it came from Visconti. However, later in 1970 the single 'Ride A White Swan' introduced a leaner, slicker and more pop-oriented band, reaching Number Two in the charts. The subsequent, self-titled album got to Number 13 in the charts, and delivered up a delightful smorgasbord of both contemporary music and also songs which harked back to the previous era. 'Beltane Walk' and 'The Wizard' are particular triumphs, with the latter (reworked from a John's Children song) possibly inspired by a claim from Bolan that he'd spent time in Paris with a wizard, who'd taught him how to levitate.



By 1971, T. Rex had become a full band, with guitar/vocalist Bolan now joined by bassist Steve Currie and drummer Bill Legend. The hippy audience who'd adopted Tyrannosaurus Rex were now replaced by a teenage audience, with girls predominant. And many believe that the glam era was truly annointed when Bolan appeared on 'Top Of The Pops' with glitter under his eyes. Later that year the album 'Electric Warrior' would top the UK charts, while 'Get It On', an iconic anthem of the era, was a Number One single, followed by 'Jeepster', which got to Number Two.

The album itself is a truly great work, as Bolan combined a new hormonally driven groove with hints of his past fascination with ethereal states. At its best, as on 'Cosmic Dancer' and 'Life's A Gas' (as well as the two aforementioned songs) we hear tantalising glimpses of a contented, focused brilliance that was unique. Here was a spokesman not just for glam rock, but for turbulent times. Bolan said back then: "I think 'Electric Warrior' for me, is the first album which is a statement of 1971 for us in England. I mean that's... If anyone ever wanted to know why we were big in the other part of the world, that album says it, for me". Of course, Bolan mania (or T. Rextacy, as it was

coined at the time) would carry on, but it was on these albums, released in an incredible three-year period, which best capture his essence.

As with all creative people, what Bolan has left here through Tyrannosaurus Rex and T. Rex are portraits of himself, his vision, his fears and aspirations – and yet, they are incomplete. Because no great

work of art is ever truly finished. It captures the spirit of the moment, and for that alone we should feel privileged. Here then is the spirit of Marc Bolan as represented by a wonderful body of songs, each of which is part of his soul.

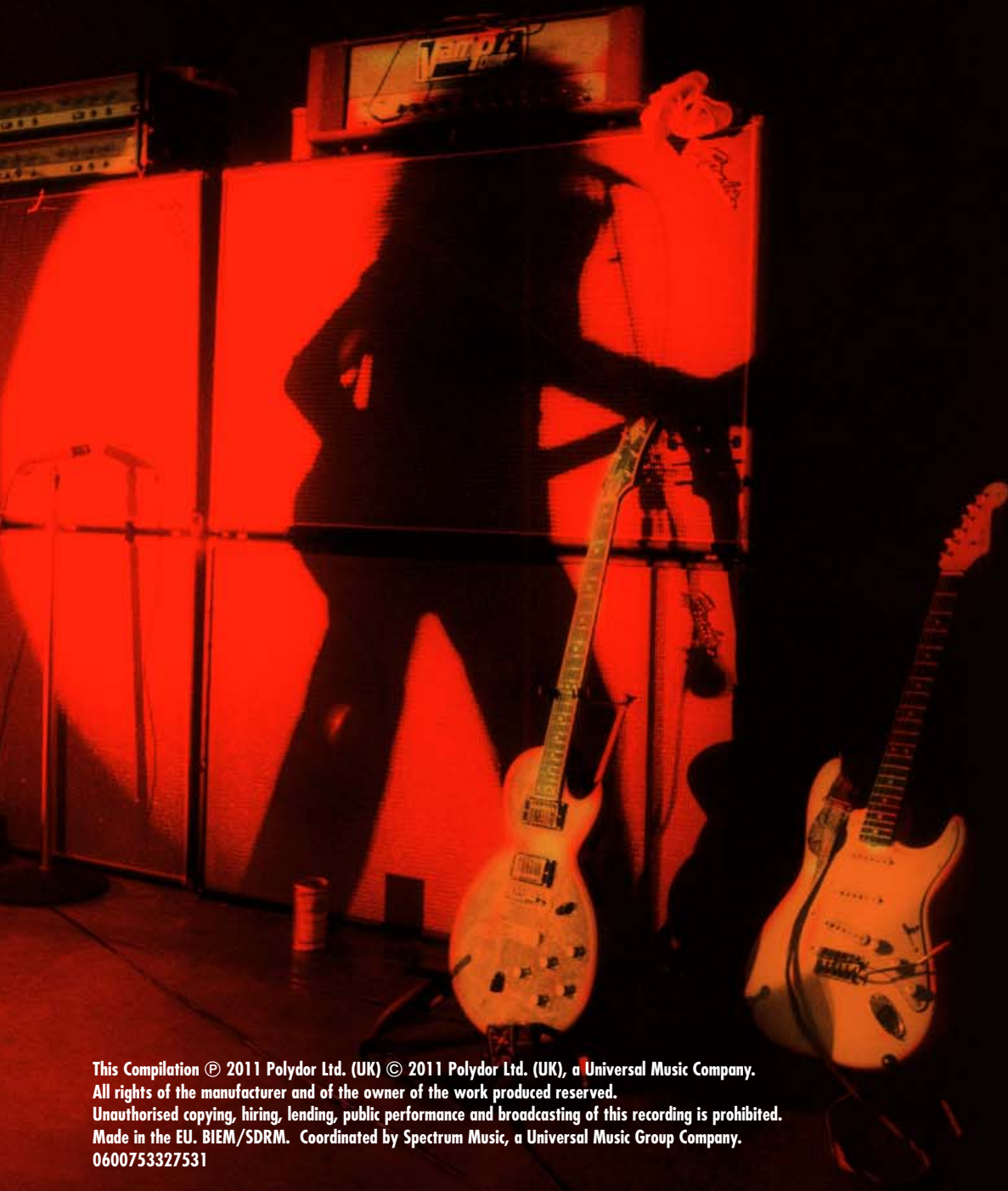
MALCOLM DOME
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Marc Bolan took T.Rex from hippie folk-rock to flamboyant glam rock 'n' roll almost overnight. Hits Get it On, Ride A White Swan and Jeepster (all here) followed and the world was never quite the same again.



1. GET IT ON T. Rex

(Bolan) Westminster Music Ltd. © 1971 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd.

2. RIDE A WHITE SWAN T. Rex

(Bolan) Westminster Music Ltd. © 1970 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd.

3. MUSTANG FORD Tyrannosaurus Rex

(Bolan) Westminster Music Ltd. © 1967 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd.

4. CAT BLACK (THE WIZARD'S HAT) Tyrannosaurus Rex

(Bolan) Lupus Music Ltd. © 1969 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd

5. JEEPSTER T. Rex

(Bolan) Westminster Music Ltd. © 1971 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd.

6. A BEARD OF STARS Tyrannosaurus Rex

(Bolan) Onward Music Ltd. © 1970 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd.

7. DEBORA Tyrannosaurus Rex

(Bolan) Onward Music Ltd. © 1968 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd.

8. SALAMANDA PALAGANDA Tyrannosaurus Rex

(Bolan) Westminster Music Ltd. © 1968 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd.

9. LIFE'S A GAS T. Rex

(Bolan) Onward Music Ltd. © 1971 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd.

10. JUNIPER SUCTION Tyrannosaurus Rex

(Bolan) Westminster Music Ltd. © 1968 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd.

11. STACEY GROVE Tyrannosaurus Rex

(Bolan) Westminster Music Ltd. © 1968 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd.

12. WARLORD OF THE ROYAL CROCODILES Tyrannosaurus Rex

(Bolan) Lupus Music Ltd. © 1969 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd.

13. COSMIC DANCER T. Rex

(Bolan) Westminster Music Ltd. © 1971 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd.

14. BELTANE WALK T. Rex

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15. THE TIME OF LOVE IS NOW T. Rex

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16. THE WIZARD T. Rex

(Bolan) Campbell Connelly & Co. Ltd. © 1970 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd.

17. SUMMER DEEP T. Rex

(Bolan) Lupus Music Ltd. © 1970 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd.

18. BLESSED WILD APPLE GIRL T. Rex

(Bolan) Westminster Music Ltd. © 1970 Straight Ahead Productions Ltd.

19. THE TRAVELLING TRAGITION Tyrannosaurus Rex

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20. DESDEMONA T. Rex

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