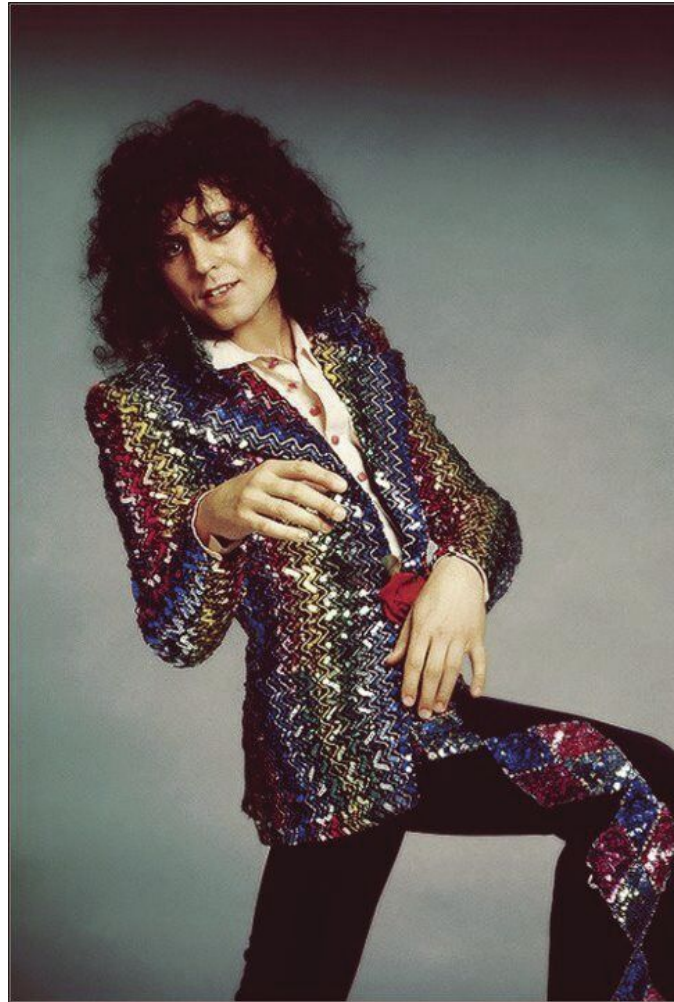


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Bang a gong to this T. Rex cover album

By SEBASTIAN GARCIA Valley Press Staff Writer
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Marc Bolan of T. Rex helped create the Glam movement.

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Do you remember T. Rex?

“Angel Headed Hipster: The Songs of Marc Bolan and T. Rex,” a 26-track music compilation honors Bolan, the Glam Rock superstar who died in a 1977 car crash and album producer Hal Willner, who died in April due to Coronavirus-related complications.

Formed in 1967 as Tyrannosaurus Rex, principle musical architect Bolan released four Psychedelic Folk albums to minimal praise. In 1970, upon shortening the band's name and transitioning to a more Pop-oriented Electric Rock sound laden with sexual innuendos, T. Rex commercially exploded.

Between 1970-1973, the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame inductees (2020) were the center of "T. Rexstacy," their most successful period marked by a string of top 10 hits and albums, though the pace of creating the Glam movement, competing with commercial frenemy David Bowie and staying ahead of musical trends initially proved too much for Bolan.

Additionally sidelined due to tax issues, an inflated ego and tepidly received albums, he was reinvigorated and in the midst of a professional comeback with "Futuristic Dragon" (1976) and "Dandy in the Underworld" (1977) at the time of his death.



Released on Sept. 4, Willner's (Saturday Night Live, Lou Reed, William S. Burroughs) T. Rex tribute convened with an eclectic cast of contributors that range from U2 (with Elton John on piano), Lucinda Williams, Todd Rundgren, Nena and Nick Cave to more unconventional artists like Kesha, Sean Lennon, Father John Misty and King Khan.

The magic in this release however, is not the star power assembled, but how the artists interact with Bolan's music. His often straight forward Boogie rompers are honored with Kesha's version of "Children of the Revolution" (1972) and Joan Jett "Jeepster" (1971). Lucinda Williams and BØRNS offer faithful covers of the slow-tempo songs "Life's a Gas" (1971) and "Dawn Storm" (1976).

Perry Farrell (Jane's Addiction) glides smoothly over "Rock On" (1972) and John Cameron Mitchell's version of "Diamond Meadows" (1970) is sentimental. Emily Haines (Metric) runs with the spacey "Ballrooms of Mars" (1972) and shoots it past Jupiter. Father John Misty, elsewhere, heightens "Main Man" (1972) with his signature brand of Soul.

Fresh takes like U2's Jazzy "Bang a Gong," (1971) Peaches' Electro Disco "Solid Gold, Easy Action" (1973) and Elysian Field's funky, "The Street and Babe Shadow" (1973) highlight the strength of T. Rex's work. While not all covers here are home runs, the majority push the original tracks into different soundscapes than Bolan intended. The result is a diverse body of work that pins what Willner must have known all along — Bolan's compositions, while deceptively simple on the surface, were performed and written to withstand and adapt through the ages, inspiring musicians of all genres and backgrounds.

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