

ALBUM REVIEW

# Bowie's Swan Song

RAYAAN IBTESHAM CHOWDHURY

"Blackstar" is the latest album by the legendary David Bowie. Extremely diverse and adventurous, it is a powerful statement of intent by Bowie, nearly fifty years into his career. If you can take one thing from this album, it's that Bowie remained as experimental as he was back in the day.

The album has seven tracks and opens with the title track, "Blackstar", which is by far the longest track in the album, clocking in at nearly 10 minutes. The haunting landscape honestly takes some getting used to



and is as far away from *Ziggy Stardust* as you can imagine. Apparently that was intentional, as Bowie had set out to sound like anything and everything but rock n' roll on this album. The title track has a lot of things going on in it with a distinct feel of jazz.

The third track "Lazarus" is full of dread and melancholy. This is the most accessible track of the album. The saxophones are out in glory here and the dissonance is strong. Bowie seemed to be letting things off his chest.

"Sue (Or in a Season of Crime)" is the most rock n' roll track in the album with

what sounds like an actual riff in the backdrop, but the haunting landscape is a constant. The stories of the girl named Sue are punctuated by sounds that are busy at work, constructing a vibrant imagery. That is an accurate description of the album: the music is always constructing images in your mind as you listen.

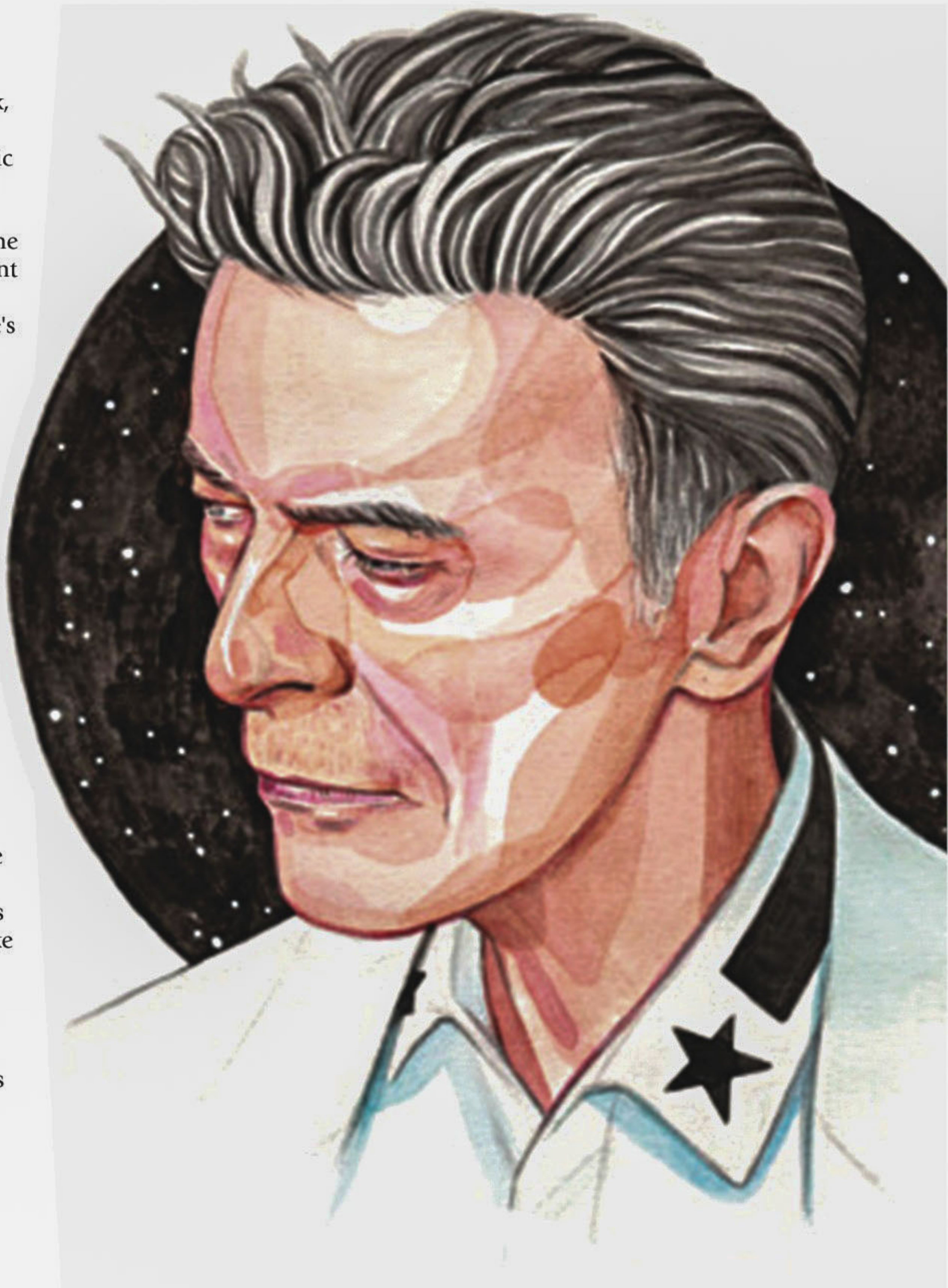
"Girl Loves Me" is painful to listen to. The sorrow in Bowie's voice is strikingly apparent in a way. On this track it's also clear to the audience that Bowie has gotten old, that he's not the same man any more. There's a certain aged timbre to his voice here, which only adds to the shifting melancholic sceneries being painted by the music.

"I Can't Give Everything Away", the closing track, is melodic, which is something that surprised me after an album full of morbidity. The saxophones almost sound *happy* as Bowie puts into words something that the world has known for a long time – David Bowie is an enigma, a man who can never fully explain the things that drive him and the things that make him who he is.

When Bowie released "The Next Day" in 2013 after a decade long hiatus, the music indicated he was moving to newer pastures. "Blackstar" seals that transformation with music that goes beyond the scope of simply experimental. He's left no stone unturned to make this an album that leaves a mark and requires many re-listens to make sense of.

The music takes a while to get used to. But once you let it grow on you, it leaves a strong impression. This is a powerful statement from David Bowie. Till the end, rock's greatest enigma was as enigmatic as ever.

*Rayaan Ibtisham Chowdhury is a business student who spends his nights trying to write a fantasy novel. Mail him at [rayaansmail@gmail.com](mailto:rayaansmail@gmail.com) if you want to talk about dragons in suits.*



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**Florida State University is a public institution that was founded in 1851. It has a total undergraduate enrollment of 32,948, in an urban campus of 475 acres.**

- Ranks 96th in the 2016 edition of Best Colleges in National Universities.
- Among the Top 200 best universities (The Academic Ranking of World Universities 2015).
- Student satisfaction 84% according to the Princeton Review (2015).
- 45% male and 55% female students.
- The application fee is US \$30. It is selective with an acceptance rate of 55.4%. Deadline for application is January 15.
- Best subjects are: Psychology, Criminal Justice, English Language and Literature.
- Tuition fees are US \$21,673 (2015-16).
- Most students complete their degree within 6 years (around 77%).





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