



Tony Visconti: The Autobiography: Bowie, Bolan and the Brooklyn Boy

Tony Visconti , Morrissey (Foreward)

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A name synonymous with ground-breaking music, Tony Visconti has worked with the most dynamic and influential names in pop, from T.Rex and Iggy Pop to David Bowie and U2. This is the compelling life story of the man who helped shape music history, and gives a unique, first-hand insight into life in London during the late 1960s and '70s.

Soon after abandoning his native New York to pursue his musical career in the UK, Visconti was soon in the thick of the emerging glam rock movement, launching T.Rex to commercial success and working with the then-unknown David Bowie.

Since his fateful move to the land of tea and beer drunk straight from the can, Visconti has worked with such names as T.Rex, Thin Lizzy, Wings, The Boomtown Rats, Marsha Hunt, Procol Harum, and more recently Ziggy Marley, Mercury Rev, the Manic Street Preachers and Morrissey on his acclaimed new album 'Ringleader of the Tormentors'.

Even Visconti's personal life betrays an existence utterly immersed in music. Married to first to Siegrid Berman, then to Mary Hopkin and later to May Pang, he counts many of the musicians and producers he has worked with as close friends and is himself a celebrated musician.

This memoir takes you on a roller-coaster journey through the glory days of pop music, when men wore sequins and pop could truly rock. Visconti's unique access to the biggest names and hottest talent, both on stage and off, for over five decades is complemented by unseen photographs from his own personal archive, and offers a glimpse at music history that few have witnessed so intimately.

Tony Visconti: The Autobiography: Bowie, Bolan and the Brooklyn Boy Details

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From Reader Review Tony Visconti: The Autobiography: Bowie, Bolan and the Brooklyn Boy for online ebook

Michelle Kato says

Some history

Enjoyed his story and learned of his contributions towards the history of rock and roll. He's been down many roads.

Stewart Home says

I'd recommend this to anyone who wants a primer on corporate ass kissing. Visconti has his tongue so far up the ass of certain living show business figures that his ghost writer's turdy tongue speaks with their voice - and in particular with the inflections of the tedious David Bowie. On the other hand, Marc Bolan is long dead and gets slagged off for being the ego-maniac he so obviously was (although personally I still really dig his super-dumb three chord bop). Reading this rant you can't help thinking that if Bowie had died in a car accident in the seventies and Bolan was still around, then Bowie would be the one being slagged off as the boring prima donna he so obviously is and Visconti's ghost voice would instead be pleasuring Bolan with his verbal rim jobs.

Michael Legge says

Shame he dies in the end.

Eric says

One of the better music industry biographies, by the man responsible for the success of David Bowie and Marc Bolan, and involved with such notable acts as Thin Lizzy, U2, Morrissey, etc. Visconti mixes his personal and professional life just enough to keep from bogging down the reader in either. The one thing that I wish he would have done, is to go in to greater detail about the songs on more albums. He goes into great detail on 'Scary Monsters' but not on any other project.

Luke says

Visconti's insight into the life of a record producer goes beyond simply sitting behind the console, pressing record and waiting for the pay cheque, this account is replete with surreal situations, highs and lows, all told in such a friendly, conversational yet passionate manner that you feel like you're there with him, in the mixing room, dining with diplomats in wall-era East Berlin, and standing shoulder to shoulder with him as he battles against a failing marriage and alcoholism. I can't help but feel this is not the standard case of

wheeling out anecdotes and spicing them up for the memoir, but actually a really heartfelt reflection that bares a lot in terms of personal life, and much more of his professional life, which is really what most of us picked the book up for.

When half way through the book I glanced at other reviews on here and was surprised to see how many people thought Visconti's choice words on Marc Bolan's character and actions towards others were unfair. Perhaps I've been completely taken in by the Brooklyn boy's friendly manner and I'm all too willing to believe his account without question, or perhaps after reading his tales of an American coming to London only to discover that showers are better than baths, Indian food is the food of gods, and that Low is arguably Bowie's most ground breaking album, maybe, just maybe, this guy's an authority we could do to listen to.

Kay Smillie says

I will be honest and state that I knew all about Tony Visconti's Marc Bolan and David Bowie connections, along with the fact that he produced the most recent Damned album but, will admit to not knowing much else about him. Thoroughly enjoyed this and admit to having no idea that he married Mary Hopkin. He has worked with a diverse number of music acts and was the obvious choice to work with Bowie in his later years. Would love to see a revised and updated version of this published.

Ray Smillie

Stew says

Detailed and well-thought read

Visconti arrived in London during the Summer of Love and went on to become one of the most successful record producers in history. Sadly, he paid a heavy price in terms of family life and three failed marriages. He does a good job of chronicling it all - good and bad.

Mike says

Excellent. The best part was the author's account of Bowie's hatred of Thin Lizzy, both personally and professionally.

Joshua Finnell says

Library Journal Review:

Behind every crash of the cymbal and strum of the guitar sits the music producer weaving notes into a

musical tapestry. Over the last forty years, Tony Visconti has applied his creativity and genius to producing music's most legendary artists: T. Rex, David Bowie, Thin Lizzy, The Moody Blues, Paul McCartney, and Morrissey. Following his rise to stardom from his humble childhood in Brooklyn to producing Bowie in London, the narrative reveals a man passionate about music and savvy enough to navigate the waters of the music industry. At the same time, Visconti's technical knowledge is on full display treating the reader to an informal history of musical production from analog to digital. Although cataloging the musical past, Visconti's autobiography is a story that is still being written. As producer of the punk band Anti-Flag's album due out in the Spring of 2008, Visconti continues to apply his innovative touch as the architect of the feverishly creative world of rock'n'roll. Visconti's story should be read by anyone who aspires to work as a producer in the music industry.

bill joestgen says

Good stuff. A very interesting read. If you own at least 3 albums with Tony Visconti's name on it this book will appeal to you.

Well written, interesting stories about some of rock's most important artists, and a chance to get to know the man whose name I kept seeing on all those album covers.

Matt says

What a fantastic read! A little disjointed sometimes, but overall this is essential reading for Bowie fans, Bolan fans, music fans and bands who are learning the ins and outs of the studio. While reading along, I re-listened to several of these albums Tony produced and it was like hearing them for the first time. I already loved many of these records, but now everything makes more sense and I hear things I've never heard before. It's like finding an easter egg in each song.

Tosh says

in my world Tony Visconti as a producer couldn't do no wrong. Please note his work with the great Les Rita Mitsouko, but here we have the main focus of his work with the fantastic David Bowie and the iconic Marc Bolan (T-Rex).

The book goes into some nerdy areas of record production as well as insights on the making of certain recordings (especially Bowie's 'Scary Monster'). Saying that Visconti wants to correct some past credits (he did the strings for McCartney's Band on the Run) and he for sure has a healthy amount of ego - but then again he was an important figure in the making of Bowie's best albums as well as the beginnings of (the important) glam rock movement.

He's opinionated which makes this book a fun read. Also he captures the times behind the recordings. This is pretty much an important book for one's library on British pop.

Sean Farrell says

An interesting book, engagingly, if erratically written. Some lovely insights into bowie the person as opposed to the rock star. Strangely, there is less info on visconti himself than one would expect - his private life remains private and only appears in glimpses between the numerous musical anecdotes.

Nikki says

I had no idea Tony Visconti produced so many great records, he has worked with everyone of note (and some not!) and this is his story of that journey. He comes across as honest and isnt afraid to highlight his own shortcomings, but I found it easy to warm to him and his story. The book was published in 2007 so must be ripe for an update. I really enjoyed reading about his personal and working relationship with Bowie as well as glimpses into the lives of other great musicians. Some come across well but there are a few insights into for example, Lennon and McCartney which suggests they are not the nicest people in the world. Having just read a Sandy Denny bio ('I always Kept a Unicorn') before this book, it was great that this story picks up the late 1960's music scene in the UK including folk, so the books complimented each other nicely. What an amazing country the UK is, given its size, at producing such amazing and prolific performers and we are so lucky that there are record producers like Tony Visconti who can help realise the vision of these amazing people.

Ian Hamilton says

Unfortunately Visconti's life story is largely humdrum, and though candid about his personal life, he wasn't the most virtuous back in his heyday. His production CV is remarkable, but I couldn't help but to think that maybe much of the "genius" in some of the great records he produced lies more with the musicians themselves.
