



# David Bowie

Composer of the Week



David Bowie  
(1947-2016)





Died in New York City, USA , in January 2016

Born in Brixton, London, in January 1947

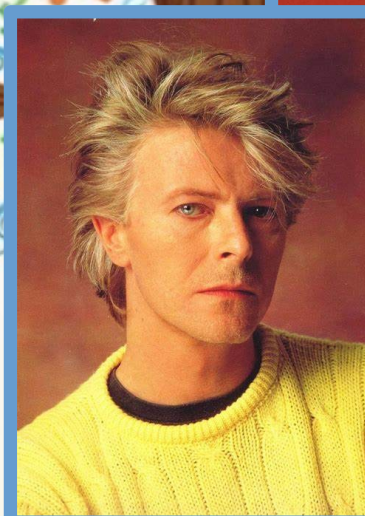
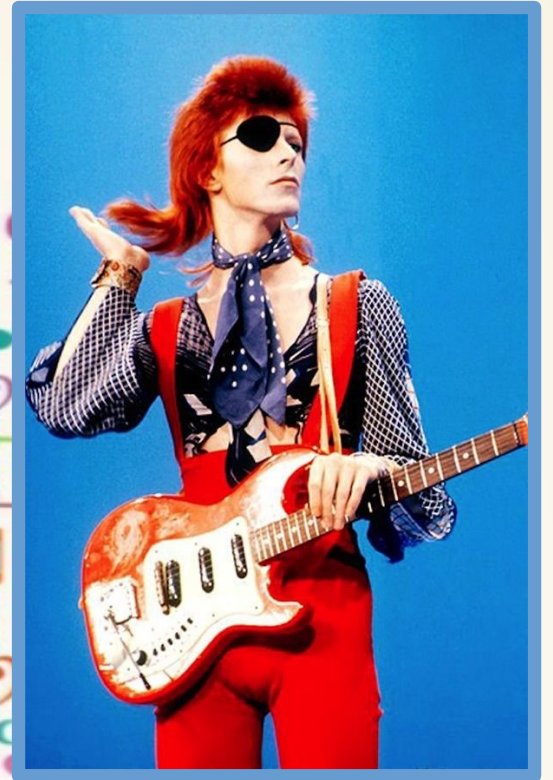
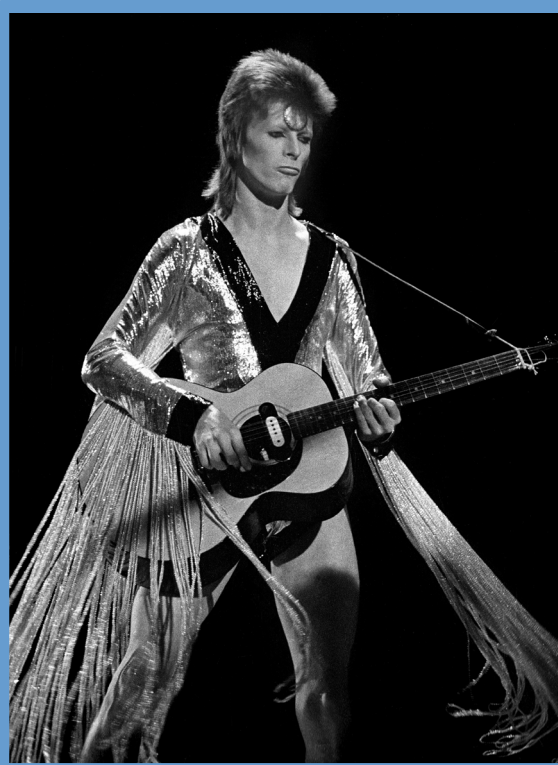
David Bowie was an English song-writer, singer and actor. He is considered by many as one of the most influential musicians of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

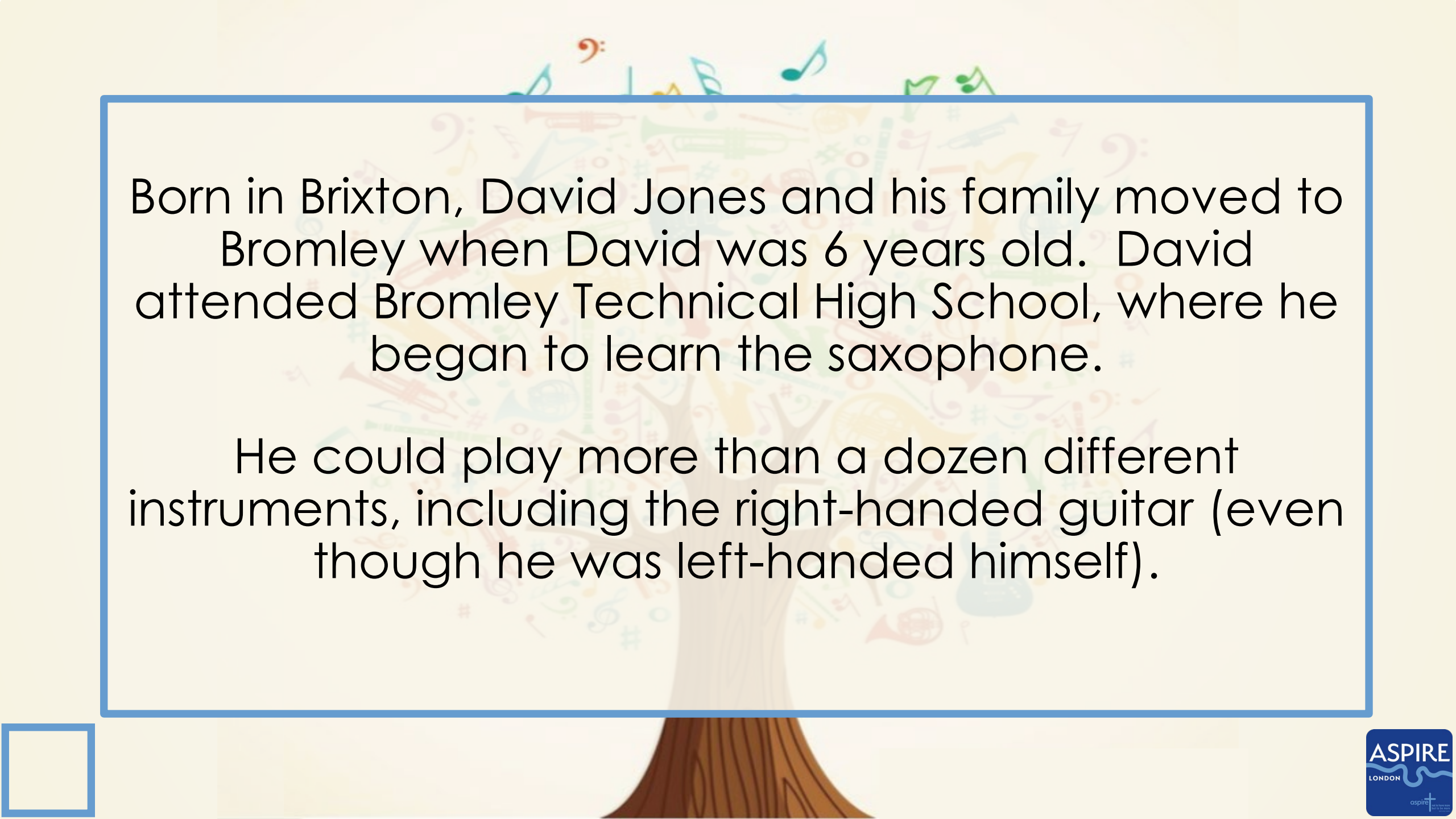


He was a visual performer, his performances were very dramatic, and during his career, he changed his image and persona several times.



He was a visual performer, his performances were very dramatic, and during his career, he changed his image and persona several times.



A background illustration of a tree with a brown trunk and a canopy of colorful musical notes and instruments. The notes are in various colors like blue, green, yellow, and red. Instruments like a trumpet and a saxophone are also visible. The tree is centered and its trunk extends to the bottom of the page.

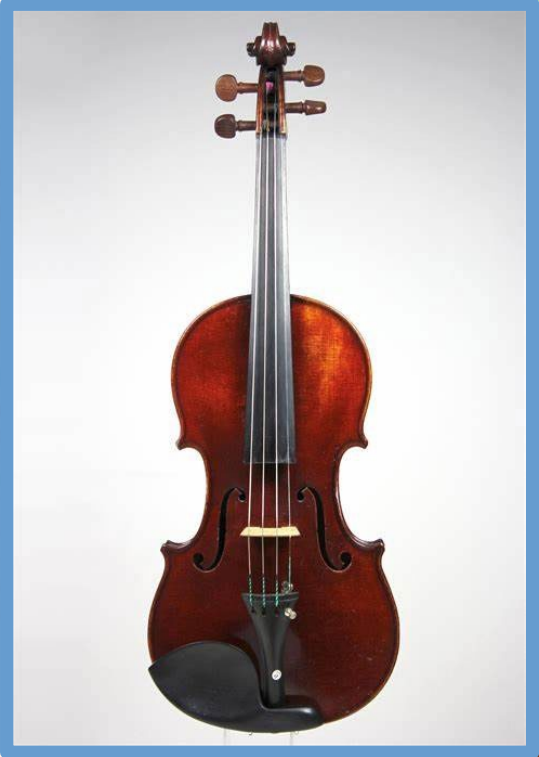
Born in Brixton, David Jones and his family moved to Bromley when David was 6 years old. David attended Bromley Technical High School, where he began to learn the saxophone.

He could play more than a dozen different instruments, including the right-handed guitar (even though he was left-handed himself).

He could play:



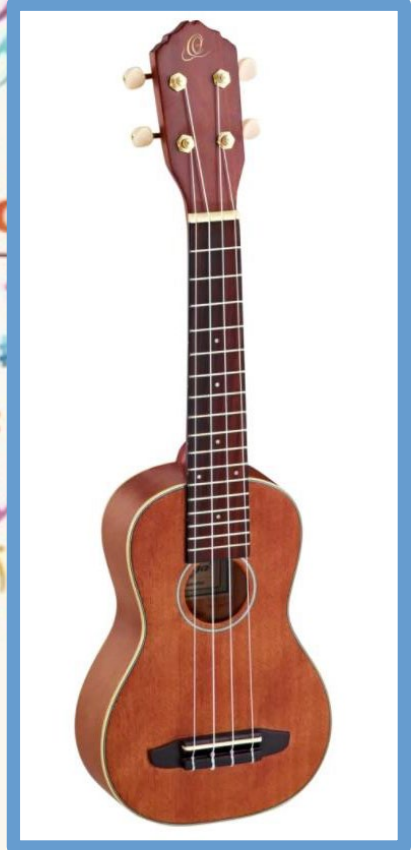
Cello



Viola



Saxophone



Ukulele







Thumb Piano



Tea-chest Bass



Harmonica



Koto



Stylophone

When he was 15, he was punched in the eye by a friend. His eye became injured and looked different to the other one.

Because of this, some people thought that his eyes were two different colours.



In 1966 he changed his name. He had been calling himself Davy Jones but this was the same as the name of the lead singer of a famous pop group of the time called The Monkeys.

So David changed his name to Bowie after the American pioneer Jim Bowie who is said to have created the Bowie knife for use in duelling.



His early compositions had strong influences of mime,  
acting, poetry and folk-music.

He could often be found performing on a Sunday night  
at the folk club he helped run at the Three Tuns pub in  
Beckenham – now Zizzi's Restaurant.



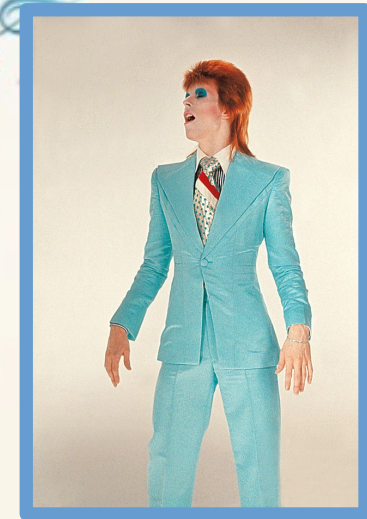
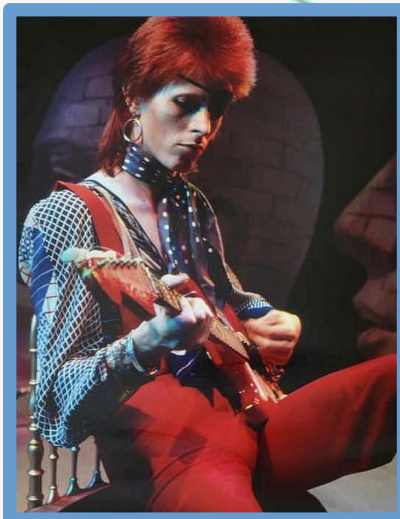
David Bowie's first big hit was **Space Oddity**. It was released two days before the US **Apollo 11** spaceship took off for its historic moon landing.



In the 1970's, Bowie's image changed, he was one of the creators of **Glam Rock**. This was still very theatrical, its main characteristics being the flamboyant clothes and make-up worn by male performers.

David invented a whole new person called **Ziggy Stardust**.

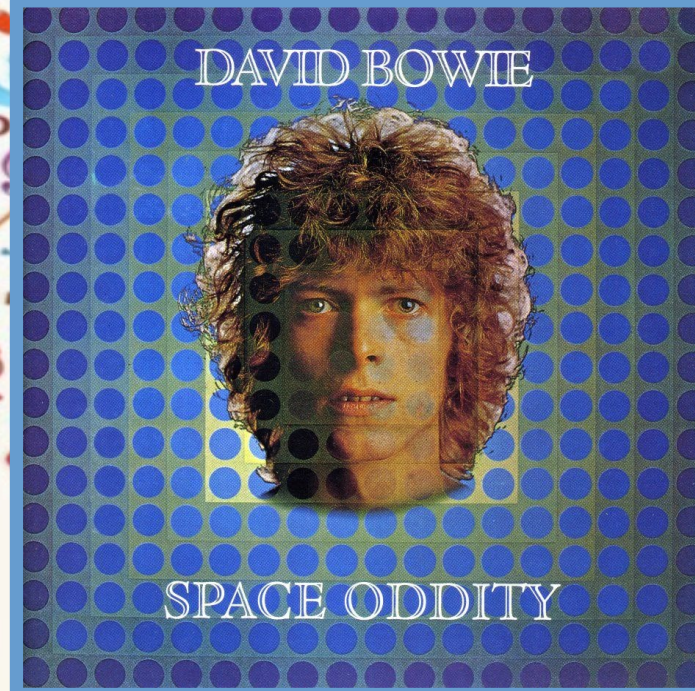
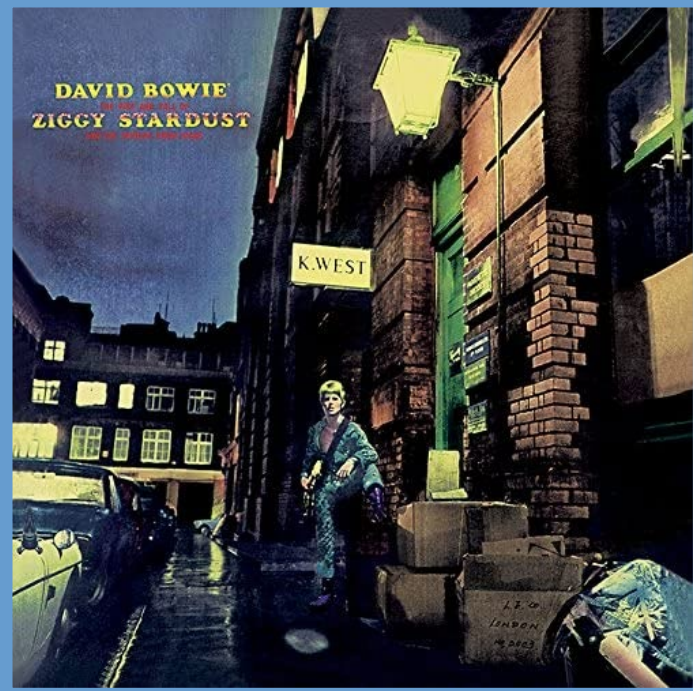
His **album** was called **The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars**.



An **album** is a collection of songs, sometimes following a theme, performed by a single artist and sold as a vinyl record. Because of the theatrical nature of Bowie's work, listening to the album means that, usually, the songs are heard in the order the performer wants – there is no shuffle.

Often, one of the songs from the album was produced by itself, on a smaller record, this was called a **single**. It was the sales of singles that counted towards being the No.1 selling song of the week.

During his lifetime, Bowie sold over 100 million records worldwide. In the United Kingdom, he was awarded 9 platinum, 11 gold, and 8 silver albums, and in the United States, 5 platinum and 9 gold. These are awarded depending on how many copies of albums are sold.





# Platinum

# Gold

# Silver



1 million US  
300,000 UK

500,000 US  
100,000 UK

60,000 UK

In 1975 he released the album **Young Americans**. He wrote the song **Fame** with John Lennon and it became his first US No.1 single.

Do you remember the name band that John Lennon was a member of?



**The Beatles**



From 1977 to 1979, Bowie lived in Berlin, Germany and released the albums: **Low**, **Heroes**, and **Lodger**. He returned 10 years later to perform in **A Concert for Berlin** which some people think helped in the destruction of the Berlin Wall some years later.



He sang **Heroes** again in the **Concert for New York City** after the September 11<sup>th</sup> bombings in 2001.

He is a member of the **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame** and he has a star on the **Hollywood Walk of Fame**.





David Bowie died in New York City in 2016, two days after his final album, **Blackstar** was released.

If you want to visit something closer to home, you can visit the Bandstand in **Beckenham Place Park**, where David Bowie performed one of his earliest concerts in 1969.

