

An Interview with Angie Bowie

Life behind her book "Lipstick Legends"

By Helen Marketti

Angie Bowie has an acute awareness of culture, life, music, writing and sexuality that has been her voice for as long as she can remember. She has a sense of style, fashion and flair since an early age. A creative mind for thinking outside the box with strong thoughts to support any topic at hand, her latest book, "Lipstick Legends" (Publish America) delves into fashion and sexuality with music intertwined which connects the dots to individuality.

She was married to David Bowie for ten years and helped to create "his look" with her natural spark for fashion and instinctively knew how it would work for him.

"I think all young girls go through that at some point where you have role models for fashion and want to read all of the latest magazines," said Angie. "I believe having lived in Switzerland for awhile made more of an impression

on me when I was young. I was very big on Sophia Loren. We had lived in Europe for several years so I was more into what was going on there than in America. I liked the styles of the English actresses and singers. I loved reading all of the fashion magazines from Switzerland, France and Italy. I attended an all girls' school that had 56 nationalities, 28 religions and 150 female students. On Sunday evenings, everyone wore their national costume. It reminded one that there were two levels, meaning there was the ethnic

and national pride type of fashion and then there was the type of fashion that people clung to because of the western world which wasn't necessarily any better during that time in the 60s but it offered a better outlook for women."

During the 60s it seemed fashion boutiques were popping up all over and it was growing in popularity where young people could acquire stylish clothing without going broke.

Angie explains how the fashion boutiques came to be, "I spent more time in England, than America. After World War II, people were still having a hard time. During the 1950s in England, everything was still very drab and gray because there were still shortages of items. By the 1960s is when it started to improve. The young people were beginning to become designers, which in turn led them to their friends who were business folks. Their business friends were happy to take the designer dreams

and create a less expensive version of the ole couture. After the war, only those of the upper echelon had access to the better textiles. So, when the young clothing designers started providing fashions for the middle class couture it still wasn't at the level where big department stores like Harrods would carry them and that's how the fashion boutiques were born. The boutiques provided a way to overcome class and privilege that was affordable. Eventually the department stores realized this because they only carried clothes

the Queen would wear so they were missing an entire market with young people and eventually saw the great potential."

Today, we often see fashion styles that resemble the looks of the 60s. "I think we see it even more now than we ever expected," said Angie. "Eventually everything peters out and the individuality of designers with the explosions of color, short skirts, long hair and all of those things run their course. It's like when you are making soup and you have all of the ingredients ready and each one of them is great on their own but when you put all of

them together it kind of turns plain brown with small splashes of color. I think fashion works the same way. It starts with all the great designers and their individual style. As time goes by it all is mixed together and becomes mundane, it loses its panache because it's manufactured quickly and the individuality is lost. If you have an order for six million pairs of pink shoes, that's not fashion any more,

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that's fitting an army." (laughs)

Angie has definite thoughts on today's rock fashion styles. "It's all a repeat," she says. "There is nothing new. By the way, I adore Lady Gaga but her looks are theatre; it has nothing to do with fashion. People love for you to think what you see on stage is fashion but it isn't, it's theatre. Those items are props and costumes. Those kinds of items are what we invent, stage and use to dress a show."

"In terms of men's fashion, I don't think men have done anything particularly

forced to endure mediocrity."

Throughout Angie's book, "Lipstick Legends", we are reminded of musicians who brought fashion into their rock look and it not only commanded attention, it showed individual style that walked hand in hand with their music. Jimi Hendrix, Brian Jones, Little Richard, Liberace, David Bowie, Marc Bolan, Motown; the endless list of put together musicians regardless of sexual origin took style and fashion while mixing the look with their music and we do remember those images.

"Until you sit down and look at things in a chronological order, you can then see exactly how it developed," said Angie. "It all glorifies peace. Even back in the days of courts and early monarchy, people concerned themselves with fashion and fine fabrics. Many dress a certain way and style so they can get laid." (laughs)

Angie describes in her book how the audience would get dressed up when going to a show and be part of the experience. She feels that has now changed. "It doesn't seem that audiences have the total camaraderie any more of being part of the concert experience. There is no longer a

collective sharing of being a team and being part of the music either by dressing in costume or having a certain look or a dance. People may sing the words but it's like repeating a mantra. It's as though audiences think towards the artist, "Entertain me or die." They sing the words while standing there in their sweatshirts and jeans, having shown up to the concert as though it was an imposition but they attend because they paid so much for the ticket."

As the former wife of David Bowie, Angie helped him to have a certain look that intertwined with his music. "David was always a mod and a dandy," explains Angie. "I took what he wore, how he looked, the things he was interested in and I put it all through the filter of what I experienced in my life and then made suggestions. I also knew he would never do a bloody thing that I said, so I just bought the clothes and hung them around. I did things in a way that had the desired effect without subverting the person's ego because they think they owe you. I didn't want him to feel like that; I just wanted to be helpful. I was sick of him not succeeding. It was quite obvious he needed to be taken in hand and have someone organizing in such a way that was hard hitting so he would stop whining about everything that was the matter with his career and focus on everything that was right for his career. I'm good at organizing and promoting. When people would ask me about it, I would back off because I wasn't trying to take credit. David is the one who wrote the songs, cavorted around onstage and slept with anything that moved. All I did was paint a frame around what he was doing and give it meaning so he could deliver it on the radio and on television. It has purpose and a meaning. It was easier to hang that on a hook. What had happened to both of us was sexuality."

She continues, "Many of those English rock and rollers had the same thing going but how could you tell the difference? You could tell the difference if you say, "He's bisexual and will sleep with anything that moves!" It's so much simpler when it's the truth. You can never sell something if it's not the truth."

For more information on Angie Bowie: www.angiebowie.net
Angie Bowie is on Facebook.



Angie Bowie at work.

interesting. I do love Michael Kors but none of them is a Valentina or a designer that really twists it. They aren't the guys that were part of City Lights Studio."

Angie continues, "Rock & Roll is rooted in fashion, the look and how many perceive themselves to be. The fashion has not become any more interesting; it has become more mundane. I remember once thinking that if I have to keep looking at someone on stage in a pair of jeans I would hurl. Now if I go to a place and see someone wearing anything else but full rock star black or jeans with a t-shirt, your jaw drops because you are amazed that someone thought of a look and took the time to get dressed up. Unfortunately though, most of the time we are



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