

David Bowie - Young Americans (1975/1991)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Young Americans* 5:10 2 *Win* 4:44 3 *Fascination* 5:43 4 *Right* 4:13 5 *Somebody Up There Likes Me* 6:30 6 *Across The Universe* 4:30 7 *Can You Hear Me* 5:04 8 *Fame* 4:12 9 *Who Can I Be Now?* 4:36 10 *It's Gonna Be Me* 6:27 11 *John, I'm Only Dancing Again* 6:57

David Bowie - Guitar, Keyboards, Piano, Saxophone, Vocals Carlos Alomar - Guitar
Ava Cherry - Vocals, Vocals (Background) Robin Clark - Vocals, Vocals (Background) Dennis Davis - Drums, Percussion Jeanie Fineberg - Vocals, Vocals (Background) Mike Garson - Keyboards, Piano Anthony Hinton - Vocals, Vocals (Background) Emir Kassan - Bass John Lennon - Guitar, Vocals Ralph MacDonald - Percussion Jean Millington Vocals (Background) Andy Newmark - Drums Warren Peace - Vocals, Vocals (Background) Pablo Rosario - Percussion David Sanborn - Saxophone Earl Slick - Guitar Diane Sumler - Vocals (Background) G. Diane Sumler - Vocals Luther Vandross - Vocals, Vocals (Background) Larry Washington - Congas, Percussion Willie Weeks - Bass, Guitar (Bass)

David Bowie had dropped hints during the Diamond Dogs tour that he was moving toward R&B, but the full-blown blue-eyed soul of *Young Americans* came as a shock. Surrounding himself with first-rate sessionmen, Bowie comes up with a set of songs that approximate the sound of Philly soul and disco, yet remain detached from their inspirations; even at his most passionate, Bowie sounds like a commentator, as if the entire album was a genre exercise. Nevertheless, the distance doesn't hurt the album -- it gives the record its own distinctive flavor, and its plastic, robotic soul helped inform generations of synthetic British soul. What does hurt the record is a lack of strong songwriting. "*Young Americans*" is a masterpiece, and "*Fame*" has a beat funky enough that James Brown ripped it off, but only a handful of cuts ("*Win*," "*Fascination*," "*Somebody up There Likes Me*") comes close to matching their quality. As a result, *Young Americans* is more enjoyable as a stylistic adventure than as a substantive record. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, Rovi

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The title song of David Bowie's *Young Americans* is one of his handful of classics, a bizarre mixture of social comment, run-on lyric style, English pop and American soul. The band plays great and Tony Visconti's production is flawless — just a touch of old-fashioned slap-back echo to give the tracks some added mystery. The rest of the album works best when Bowie combines his renewed interest in soul with his knowledge of English pop, rather than opting entirely for one or the other. Thus, "Win," one of his best pop ballads, makes great use of an R&B chorus; it works much better than the straight James Brown impersonation "Right." He does a plaintive version of John Lennon's "Across the Universe," while "Fame" and "Fascination," besides being complementary titles, continue his merger of styles on a positive note.

As for Bowie's growth as an artist, the highlight of the album comes when he stops the band and asks, "Isn't there one damn song that can make me break down and cry?" With any other pop singer in the world, you'd know that he or she wanted to be taken seriously. With Bowie, you believe that he half does and half just says what he thinks he's supposed to. Which isn't bad, but only the way he is.---Jon Landau, rollingstone.com

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