



Blogcritics is an online magazine, a community of writers and readers from around the globe.

Publisher: [Eric Olsen](#)



## REVIEW

# DVD Review - *Mott the Hoople: Under Review, An Independent Critical Analysis*

Written by [Metal Dad](#)

Published June 10, 2007



This 90 minute DVD covers the career of a great band not often remembered, but a band who wielded great influence as probably the best pre-punk band to come out of the UK.

Mott the Hoople came out of the Hereford band Silence which consisted of Mick Ralphs (guitar), Verden Allen (organ), Pete Watts (bass), and Dale Griffin (drums). After adding Stan Tippens on vocals they recorded a few tracks. The group caught the eye of Island Records, were signed, and moved to London to begin recording with legendary producer Guy Stevens.

Stevens got them to change the name of the band to Mott the Hoople from the novel of the same name by author Willard Manus. A veteran singer/songwriter named Ian Hunter was invited to join the band which led vocalist Stan Tippens to become the band's road manager. The band had begun to amass a loyal following by virtue of their live performances. In 1969 the band released their eponymous debut, *Mott the Hoople*, to mild success. Three more albums followed by 1971, *Mad Shadows*, *Wildlife*, and *Brain Capers*. In spite of their rabid fans, these albums did not sell well and did not receive very favorable press.

The DVD chronicles how the band, on the verge of splitting up, were offered the song "Suffragette City" by David Bowie who was a fan of the band. Mott declined the offer, leading Bowie to write "All the Young Dudes" for them. This song became the single and title track of the Bowie produced album. It also gave Mott The Hoople their first hit single, and broke them in a huge way in the UK and the United States.

Mick Jones (The Clash) remembers how "All the Young Dudes" was a turning point for Mott much in the same way that "Ride a White Swan" indicated the change of Marc Bolan's Tyrannosaurus Rex to T-Rex. Journalists Daryl Easlea, John Robb, and Kris Needs are joined here by Nicky Horne — who produced shows on BBC Radio 1 from 1970-1973 — to discuss the merits and deficiencies of Bowie as producer on *All the Young Dudes*.

The image shift of the band to the burgeoning "Glam" scene is discussed with a general consensus that the band was unfairly tagged with the glam label. Daryl Easlea offers an interesting comment on the gender politics inherent in the Glam scene.

Prior to the recording sessions for Mott's next album, organist Verden Allen left the band due to dissatisfaction with the touring life. He was replaced by Love Affair keyboardist Morgan Fisher. The album *Mott* was released in 1973. This release showed a maturing, somewhat jaded band. Ian Hunter was coming into his own as a songwriter. Mick Ralphs' "I'm a Cadillac/El Camino Dolo Rosos" was a real gem among the collection of Hunter tunes. Subsequently Ralphs left the band to form Bad Company with Paul Rodgers. His replacement was Luther Grosvenor from Spooky Tooth who was re-christened Ariel Bender.

This was the lineup which went into the studio to record their 1974 release *The Hoople*. Ken Emerson wrote about this album in Rolling Stone, "It seemed a post-glitter breakthrough, debunking superstardom and demythologizing rock."

The special relationship Mott had with the band Queen is explored. Queen had a supporting spot on the bill of the major U.S. tour Mott undertook behind *The Hoople*.

After a UK show which turned out to be their last, Luther Grosvenor left to be replaced by former Bowie guitarist Mick Ronson. A scheduled UK tour was subsequently cancelled when Hunter had an emotional and physical breakdown. Hunter and Ronson soon left the band to record and tour as a duo. The band shortened their name to Mott and recruited vocalist Nigel Benjamin and Ray Major. Two more albums were released, *Drive On* and *Shouting and Pointing*. Neither album sold well, and Benjamin departed to be replaced

This is a fascinating retrospective of the career of a band whose influence surpassed by far their commercial success. One of the extras available is some Super-8 film shot by Morgan Fisher while on tour with Mott in the States in 1974. The footage and commentary provide a remarkable insight into the life of a touring band.

Ian Hunter has always struck me as one of the most literate rockers who ever graced a stage or picked up a guitar. His book, *Diary of a Rock 'n' Roll Star* provides a glimpse into the trials, frustrations, and joy of a band on the road. His songs have stood the test of time and are as relevant today as they were back in the early Seventies. He once sang that "rock 'n' roll's a losers game." But he was no loser and rock is much richer for having seen the likes of Mott the Hoople.

Hardcore: It's a way of life. As long as you keep it real and do it from your heart, that's being hardcore. It's not a pair of jeans, baggy jeans and a band t-shirt don't make you hardcore. It's a family. I count on you, you count on me. I'm a husband to one remarkable, long-suffering wife & father to two sons and a daughter, I'm a network wizard in my spare time.

## Comments

#1 — June 10, 2007 @ 23:57PM — Glen Boyd [\[URL\]](#)

Nice review and overview of one of the 70's great, forgotten bands. As the man behind the shades, Ian Hunter's songs combined the literacy of Dylan with the punch of the Rolling Stones to create something that should have sold a lot more records than it actually did.

Mott were simply ahead of their time in my opinion. You mention the Clash here, and they are just one of many bands who owe their very existence to the pioneering influence of Mott The Hoople.

Again, nicely done Mr. Dad

-Glen

