Dreaming of 1983: A Tribute to David Bowie's Serious Moonlight Tour

An overjoyed David Bowie grabs the mic.

# Intro: Finding a Time Machine

If I had access to a time machine, I'd totally go back to 1983 and try to get a concert ticket to David Bowie's Serious Moonlight tour. It's my favorite concert! (Too bad I was born in 1988, I was about 20~ years too late to actually attend.) Most people seem to gravitate more towards the Ziggy Stardust era, but there's something really special about Serious Moonlight that wows me every time I listen to it. The setlist, the emphasis on sax and brass instruments, the costumes, the *hair*! Unfortunately, time travel isn't a thing yet, but we do have the next best thing to a time machine: video and audio recordings!

## Video: The HBO Film

This is probably the first way anyone experiences the Serious Moonlight tour. It's the only official video recording available to consumers, and it's incomplete! It's a long concert and they couldn't fit all of it on the VHS. Whoever was in charge of making the DVD version didn't put the cut parts back either (or maybe they lost them).

There are [some bits and pieces of the concert](https://www.youtube.com/c/davidbowie/search?query=1983) available on YouTube via the official David Bowie channel, but it's mostly just the highlights.

## Audio: Official & Not So Official

In 2018, we finally got an [official release](https://www.amazon.com/Serious-Moonlight-Live-Remastered-Version/dp/B07MBHQYR5) of the Serious Moonlight concert on CD. It's basically the audio from the HBO film and is also *incomplete*. The audio has been remastered, but the sound quality is not great. It sounds like we're in a tin can—lots of echo and almost like someone's jacked up the treble. Honestly, I've heard better bootleg recordings. Speaking of the elephant in the room...

Bootlegs! There's probably one for each day of the concert out there somewhere, and the quality ranges from fantastic to terrible. They're illegal, but they're the closest we have to an actual time machine. **For legal purposes I must say that I do not condone bootlegs.** Prior to 2018, it was really easy to accidentally buy one on Amazon thinking, "Oh, it's a Japan release, maybe they only released it over there!"

Before I go into what makes this concert tour so special, it's helpful to understand some historical context.

"Put on your red shoes and dance the blues."

# History: The Commercial Period

A brief history about the commercial period.

Stevie Ray Vaughn and Carlos Alomar

Carmine Rojas (left), David Bowie (center), and Carlos Alomar (right).

# Setlist: More Old than New

Concert wasn't just for newer fans of the pop rock Let's Dance album.

Insert google graph?

[Check out the full setlist stats @ setlist.fm](https://www.setlist.fm/stats/david-bowie-6bd6ee66.html?tour=bd7fd22)

Bowie with the infamous skull prop used during "Cracked Actor" performance.

# Performance: Sound and Vision

Sound and vision. Introduce the subsections.

The theatrics of the SM tour vs Glass Spider tour. Not as much focus but still there.

The costumes, the hair! Best Bowie hair.

The voice. Bowie, enough said. Say more.

Differences in sound on different days. Sax/brass focus vs. guitar focus.