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OPINION

BY MALCOLM HANDLEY



Malcolm Handley has a great night with the former Roxy Music frontman



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Bryan Ferry

Sophistication has always been a byword for Bryan Ferry performances and this latest edition is no exception and - with the added attraction of his bow-tie elegant 1920s jazz orchestra - the former Roxy front man his continuing his evolutionary musical journey.

A long-time fan of jazz, Ferry has now made it a central theme of his latest tour with the first part of the show given over to the Bryan Ferry Orchestra with some excellent 20s interpretations of Roxy Music classics including Avalon, For Your Pleasure along with Young and Beautiful. They are all superbly delivered by this nine-strong band who, both individually and together superbly weave an irresistible jazz spell.

If that suggests Ferry is ready to leave his rock roots then that notion is blown away by the explosive appearance of long-time Ferry and Roxy guitarist Oliver Thompson -

Bobbie Gordon who have a string of tours to their names and, arguably the most dynamic rock drummer touring at the moment, Cherisse Ofosu-Osei.

Ollie Thompson has worked with Ferry on a number of collaborations and his superb solo and rock based style both contrasts and compliments the cultured smoothness and, on stage, there is no hiding Ferry's admiration.

Cherisse attacks drum solos with an undeniable and irresistible passion she is a joy to here and see – a tremendous performer.

Of course it is Ferry the audience as come to see and he steps onto stage effortlessly into the groove with equal ease. The Irish ballad Carrickfergus, Jerome Kern's Smoke Gets in Your Eyes and The Way You Look Tonight set the sophisticated tone and have the audience totally absorbed.

Soon he ups the gears and Don't Stop The Dance, Oh Yeah [On The Radio] are among the Roxy tracks given a new but still distinctly Rock 'n' Roll treatment and when the opening chords of Street Life break out, so do the audience. The Lowry rolled back the years to become a pop venue with hundreds up on their feet, clapping dancing and giving every new track their own backing.

What made the evening even more enjoyable was that the band, orchestra and Ferry too were obviously enjoying every minute – you just can't fake that sort of fun.

For all his ability to merge styles and influences with astonishing success over the past four decades, Ferry is a rocker at heart and, I suspect, along this tour will seduce another generation of fans.

***Bryan Ferry his orchestra and band is touring the UK and is in Cardiff on 20 November and Liverpool on 6 November.*

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