

Review: Bryan Ferry, St David's Hall, Cardiff

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OPINION

BY GARETHEVANS



The King of Cool sent a capacity crowd home with a spring in their step



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Bryan Ferry performed at St David's Hall in Cardiff

There was a blonde lady in the second row of Bryan Ferry's sell-out gig at St David's Hall last night who beamed from start to finish.

And she was not alone. The Roxy Music frontman, returning to Cardiff for the first time in six years, never disappoints.

With more than 40 years of material to choose from, it is little wonder Ferry's set was an eclectic mix of ages, styles and moods.

There was something for everyone - from the dulcet tones of Smoke Gets In Your Eyes to Roxy rollercoaster Out Of The Blue.

It is Ferry's ability to blend seamlessly the weird (so said my plus one) and the

I can't think of anyone else who would dare fuse legendary saxophonist Charlie Parker into a rock concert, least not in the 21st century.

Ferry was in town to promote his new instrumental project, The Jazz Age - a tribute to the roaring 1920s, which includes covers of some of his best-known hits.

So smitten was he with the end result, that Ferry took his self-made jazz ensemble on the road with him - and it was they who kicked off proceedings.

The man himself slinked onto stage six tracks in wearing a floral Louis Vuitton suit, complete with black tie. Once dubbed the "coolest living Englishman", Ferry has lost none of his polish.

His hair may be greying but the miner's son from County Durham has the energy and poise of a man half his age. So suave is Ferry, he pulls a handkerchief from his pocket to adjust his mic stand as he sings.

Roxy standards Love Is The Drug, Oh Yeah and Jealous Guy set the tone for a rip-roaring Let's Stick Together - but it was A Song For Europe that really stood out.

His voice sounded as good as when the song was recorded in 1973 and as he whistled his way off stage, Ferry appeared deep in thought as if harking back to his Roxy heyday.

Ferry would return for a rousing second half (the decibel count rose markedly after the break) and the only surprise was that it took until Casanova - 30 minutes from the end - to get his loyal Welsh following to their feet.

As the lower tiers swelled around the stage, Ferry opened up and his trademark wavy arms, jarring legs and air guitar were mirrored by those swooning at his feet.

Ferry's hand-picked backing band warrants more than passing mention and were impeccable throughout. But as a self-confessed Roxy connoisseur (last night was my tenth Ferry show), I admit to having been a tad apprehensive.

Cherisse Osei is not legendary Roxy drummer Paul Thompson, and like a first meeting with the in-laws, I had my suspicions.

But I need not have worried. Aside from the main man, pint-sized Osei stole the show and really struck a chord with die-hard Ferryites.

Her dynamism was none more prevalent than on a booming Editions Of You - which left middle-aged men punching the air (really, they were) and sent a capacity crowd out into the biting November cold with a spring in their step.

It was a triumphant return for one of music's real luminaries.

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