Roxy Music, Eno & Bryan Ferry -- state-of-the-art rock

by Neal Vitale

The apellation Brian Peter George St. John le Baptiste de la Salle Eno represents something of an unknown quantity here in America; likewise, the names Bryan Ferry, Phil Manzanera, Andy Mackay, Eddie Jobson, Paul Thompson, Andy MacKay, Eddie Jobson, Paul Thompson, Andy Mackay on saxes, and one-vanished bass-player Graham Simpson; musically and lyrically avant-garde and one would and John Wetton are not exactly what Bryan Ferry, Phil Manzanera, Andy Mackay in his outlandish chartreuse presentation on a variety of absurd-looking axes, of new and musically tumultuous bass-player John Wetson (late of the final, now disbanded, King Crimson), of non-disrupt and nearly hidden drummer Paul Thompson, and of southern South America-raised guitarist Phil Targett-Adams Manzanera nevertheless did not provide a strong, central visual focus.

The set, though, was indeed marvelous. Though the opening number, like "Prarie Rose" and "Out Of The Blue," suffered from a lack of cohesive energy -- as well as at the hands of a most histrionic and puzzled sound system -- the show's climax was truly astonishing. Ending with a breathtaking barrage of "Virginia Plain," "Editions Of You," "Do The Strand," and "The Thrill Of It All," and drawing energy from the underflow crowd's wild enthusiasm. Roxy Music relinquished and reinforced the notion that it selected in "state of the art" rock performances of Ferry's more indulgent dowdly songs like "Song For Europe" and "Bitter" -- added another dimension to his world-weary/fashion-conscious image of cabaret-couched romance.

Brian Eno has been approaching it all from a very different vantage point. He is a confessed non-musician, so his stance is one raised several layers of experiment to his world-weary/fashion-conscious image of cabaret-couched romance.

The second Roxy Music album, For Your Pleasure, was released in 1973, and continued to fashion the Ferry-squashed portrait of pop culture -- blending fifties rock 'n' roll, chic decadence, the musical influences of the Beatles and Zappa, and a European aloof and impersonal romanticism with a distinctly self-conscious humor. For You Pleasure, begins ushering in yet another bassist (in the person of John Porter), opening up yet another musical genre for the group to pursue. Without dabbling in the almost Zappa-esque comedy of Roxy Music's "In Every Dream Home A Heartache" (an insufferable narrative and singing comment on the modern middle class), numbers like "The Bogus Man" gave Manzanera room to display his barharous and muddled sound system -- the show's climax was truly astonishing. Ending with a breathtaking barrage of "Virginia Plain," "Editions Of You," "Do The Strand," and "The Thrill Of It All," and drawing energy from the underflow crowd's wild enthusiasm. Roxy Music relinquished and reinforced the notion that it selected in "state of the art" rock performances of Ferry's more indulgent dowdly songs like "Song For Europe" and "Bitter" -- added another dimension to his world-weary/fashion-conscious image of cabaret-couched romance.