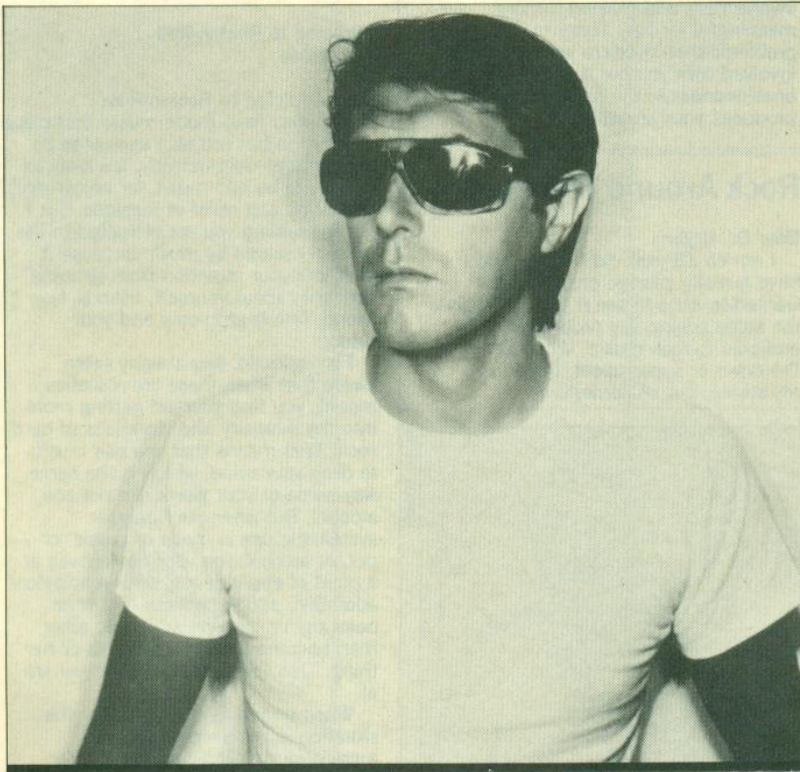


LONGPLAYERS

Edited by Paul Nelson

The Intimate and Distant Bryan Ferry How to Love (or Leave) Elliott Murphy



Ferry's fourth solo LP is reflective, experimental and successful.

In Your Mind—Bryan Ferry (Atlantic)

by Mitchell Schneider

Bryan Ferry is an oddball messenger from the underside of pop central. His voice somewhere between an inebriated Bing Crosby and a detached Marlene Dietrich, Ferry on six Roxy Music albums crooned about fractured romance, sometimes comparing love with war ("May day, cut down to size again") and narcotics ("Catch that buzz/Love is the drug/And I need to score"). For Ferry, pleasure and love don't so much represent possible salvation from ennui as they do inevitable despair—and, all at once, that fascinates, disillusions, and amuses him. Just give

him his Beauty Queen, his "inflatable doll," his Mother of Pearl, his bitchy seductress, the Siren.

In Your Mind, Ferry's fourth solo album and his first of entirely original material, is a thrilling rock & roll waltz from an anguished but still yearning lover. Not since Roxy's *Stranded* have Bryan Ferry's chief abilities—to sound simultaneously amused and pained, to construct intelligent nonsense verse through clever juxtaposition of clichés—come across so well.

Unlike his previous solo effort, *Let's Stick Together* (basically a collection of cover versions and Roxy remakes recorded over a span of three years), *In Your Mind* is unified by its reflective mood and theme. Take, for instance, Side One. The exuberant hope of "This

Is Tomorrow" becomes the romantic frustration of "All Night Operator," and the dramatic parting of two lovers in "One Kiss" becomes the passionate need of "Love Me Madly Again." Of course, however much Ferry intermittently plays up these emotions, there is always an ironic undertow provided by those champagne-and-novocaine vocals.

In Your Mind, which features many of *Together's* musicians (guitarist Chris Spedding, saxophonist Chris Mercer, and Roxy associates Phil Manzanera, Paul Thompson, and John Wetton), merges the idiosyncratic with the conventional. Implicit throughout is an amazing tug-of-war tension between Ferry's eccentric syllable elongations and the streamlined production. There are catchy melodies, shapely rhythms, lush string and horn arrangements, plus soul-sister backing. The resultant sound is busy, but not cluttered. If Roxy Music's first four LPs were wildly experimental (actually, masterpieces of controlled hysteria: dense and erratic rhythms, snaky guitars, shadowy synthesizers, meandering vocals), *In Your Mind* is equally adventurous.

As camp, the album is—how do they say it?—*fabulous*. In "Rock of Ages," the "cold and sober" sentimental fool returns, actually seeking companionship for his pain ("Will you stay/And share my sorrow?"). Here, the female chorus gushes "Still you move me/Knock me cold," and the swirling instrumentation and gospel harmonies create a mood of holy contemplation. "One Kiss," a Sixties-type ballad combining dreamy melody with zesty sax and lead-guitar runs, unites disparate clichés that Ferry intones with an hilarious air of seriousness. Locked in pose, he goes through all of the motions: "One kiss—one for the road—what is more?/One kiss—roughly expressing all that lips are for." The song points up the uncanny genius of his lyrics—their ability to be intimate and distant at the same time. "Love Me Madly Again," which mates ethereal orchestration with holocaustal guitar, extends Ferry's infatuation with haughty women: "Do you make savage love when you meet/In the zig-zag shadows that promise much."

In Your Mind is yet another invitation from Ferry to get lost in the thrill of it all. At times, the record practically hollers out, "Take it *beyond* the limit!," particularly when the singer parodies spiritual possibility on the title track ("Will you scale the silver studded mountain/Where contemplation'll spring to mind") and celebrates abandon through flamboyantly absurd lyrics (listen to "Tokyo Joe").

But soured romance, of course, turns Ferry's pleasure to despair—in fact, the album fluctuates continually between the two feelings until they seem to become one. In "Party Doll," Ferry, behind a haunting skating-rink organ, emerges from his "wishin' well of loneliness" to murmur: "I'll wind you up—let's twist again/It's a sin/Skin to

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skin/Amen."

With every listening, *In Your Mind* takes on more shape. What initially might sound disjointed soon becomes ordered. Somehow, the abundant nuances, hooks, and backing harmonies fall assuredly into place. True, there's nothing here as twisted as Roxy Music's "Editions of You" or "Mother of Pearl." Still, I think it's incredible how producers Ferry and Steve Nye have come up with a commercially appealing sound that fully retains Roxy's lovable campiness. This is a rock-steady record with brains, passion, and balls—and there's not a throwaway cut. To my mind, the only thing that remains to be seen is whether Bryan Ferry, who is supposed to tour here soon, can cut it live. If he can, watch out!