## Shy Guy BRYAN FERRY INTERVIEW

There's something happening here, and it is gradually becoming clear. The hesitant laugh, the fumbling for the first of many cigarettes, the fearful look in those rivetting blue eyes, the fidgeting in the chair — Bryan Ferry is both shy and nervous.

This is both surprising and somehow endearing. After recently facing the amiably extravagant self-confidence of Robert Plant and hearing of the surly arrogance of Sting, to meet an equally (if not more so) good-looking, talented British singer/songwriter without an ego problem is a decided pleasure.

Given Ferry's long-term status as suave pin-up boy for the urban sophisticate set (G.Q. and Esquire, not 17 and Smash Hits), the awkwardness of his demeanour is disconcerting, but Ferry soon tells you what you already detect in his eyes; he'd far rather be somewhere else.

"You just have to accept that interviews are a part of the job you don't like but have to do. I'd love to just put the record out and that's it, but I'm realistic enough to know that there are a lot of other records released every week.

"If you've spent as long a time making a record as I did this, you start to get a little nervous when you finally finish it. You think 'My God, I should at least tell people it's available. I've been doing a lot of interviews, especially in Europe, because I'm not going on tour with this album, at least not at this stage. Still, I survived the 20 minutes of the Live Aid concert, so maybe I'll do some more

The record in question is Boys and Girls, the-

oretically Bryan Ferry's sixth solo LP, but more accurately one that can be seen as a follow-up to the 1982 swansong of Roxy Music, Avalon.

Roxy Music, in essence, was Ferry's baby ever since Brian Eno split for freer pastures back in 1973. Founder member saxophonist Andy Mckay and early recruit guitarist Phil Manzanera certainly added their own stylings to Roxy's distinctive Music, but Ferry increasingly stamped his individual sound and vision on the project, right down to the album cover designs.

"My best work has been with Roxy Music; that's the major part of my catalogue," emphasises the handsome hitmaker.

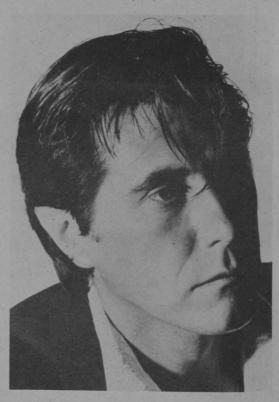
The band split once before, back in the summer of 76, only to re-unite two years later, going on to produce the *Manifesto*, *Flesh and Blood* and Avalon albums. Looks like it's Permanent Splitsville this time around, however.



"No, it wasn't really an amicable parting," explains Mr Ferry, exhaling yet more nicotine (Dunhills, not the expected Gitanes)."We had always more or less disappeared into our own lives after each project we did; we never hung out together. This time I just knew or felt there'd be no coming back. Even when I was making Avalon, it felt like the end of a run for me, it was as far as I wanted to go with it. If it had carried on, would it have been for the right reasons? "I don't think the security of a trading name is the right reason to make music. So many groups

stay together too long because they're afraid to leave. I just wanted to try and do something with a complete lack of limitation."

Avalon was a perfect epitaph for a band that was arguably the most influential, certainly one of the most succesful (their eight studio albums all made the UK Top 10) British bands of the 70s.



The aural equivalent of Haagen-Dazs ice cream (smooth, creamy and expensive), Avalon showed all the pretenders to the Roxy throne just who

In retrospect, the choice of album title was prophetic. According to Arthurian legend, Avalon was the island to which King Arthur was sent to

Yes, I did feel the irony of the title," concedes Ferry. "At that point I did think it would be the last one, so I toyed with that Arthurian idea — this is the end — in my usual melodramatic way. I don't think we could have done a better album than that with the same nucleus of people."

No one could accuse Bryan Ferry of rushing the starting gun to leap into the post-Roxy void; three years elapsed from Avalon before Boys and Girls hit the record racks. He admits to a bad case of writer's block while working on the album and claims "I'd love to do it at a faster rate. I used to record at a much different pace, I once did three albums in a year!

"In the context of the rock world, that is a long time, but I have contemporaries who are painters. It is normal for them to take two years between exhibitions of their work, and, without wanting to be high-falutin' about it, that's how I really look at it. This was an important album for me to do. Hopefully I've learned from this how to make the next a little faster." CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

