

FASHION » ROCK 'N' ROLL MUSE

# Ferry tails

After three decades as a pop idol, Roxy Music's Bryan Ferry is leaving his mark on the fashion world

BY ELIO IANNACCI

White dinner jacket. Wide black tie. Loose dress pants. Open cuffs. Ever since British pop singer Bryan Ferry started getting famous in the late 1970s with his now-defunct glam band Roxy Music, he inadvertently changed the way rock 'n' rollers styled themselves onstage.

Now, after more than 30 years in the spotlight, the crooner, 62, is changing the way regular men dress.

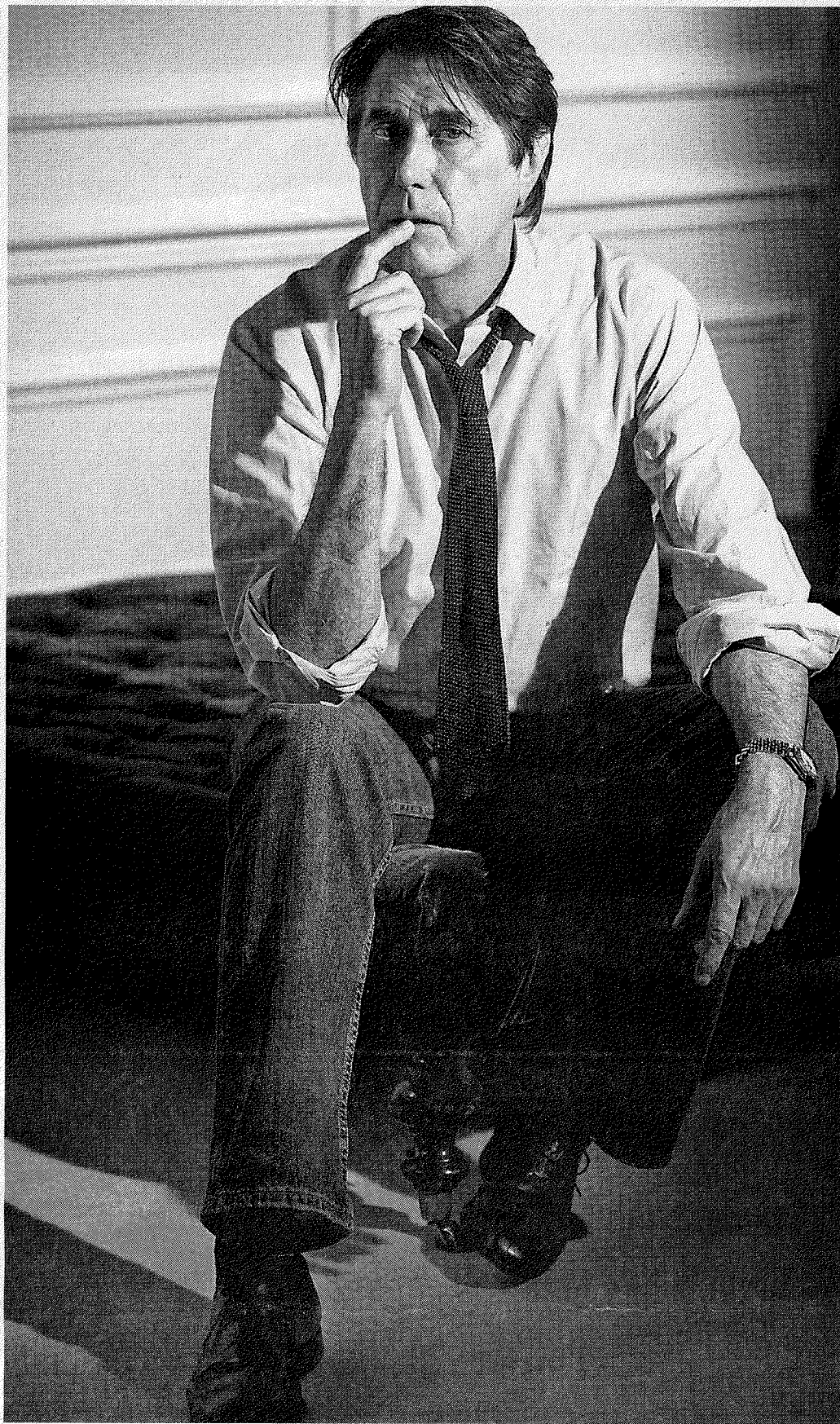
Having just released a DVD of live performances called *Dylan-esque Live: The London Sessions* – to complement his 12th solo disc, *Dylan-esque* – Ferry's elegantly tousled image has become as influential as his music. His signature dishevelled playboy aesthetic – a Monte-Carlo-duke-meets-Rolling-Stone style – has even managed to inspire catwalks for fall/winter 2007.

Ferry's suave sensibilities can be seen in a myriad of this season's collections, including Dior Homme's futuristic forties line, replete with trench jackets, satin-lapelled tweed blazers and baggy dress pants (which harks back to Ferry's look during his sixth album, 1985's *Boys and Girls*). John Varvatos and Neil Barrett were also bitten by the Ferry bug, opting to showcase two major items from the singer's enviable closet in various forms – glossy, long, black leather jackets (which look like they could have been worn on stage during a seventies Roxy Music tour) and the singer's trademark *film noir* overcoats (seen in videos such as *Slave To Love*).

His stylish impact even prompted British department store Marks & Spencer to use Ferry as a spokesmodel this year in a campaign for Autograph, the chain's signature brand of men's wear. The London Telegraph reported that sales jumped up since Ferry joined the fray (M&S is lining up another suitable pop model, as Ferry has ended his contract with the company).

It's not the first time Ferry has influenced fashion. Last year, Burberry and Belgium-based label Dries Van Noten created collections that looked as though they were stolen right out of videos from Ferry's hit solo songs *Don't Stop The Dance* and *Tokyo Joe*. In fact, Van Noten was so enchanted, he played mash-up remixes of Roxy Music's most famous songs while his leopard-clad (a staple pattern for Ferry when his song, *Let's Stick Together*, went Top 10) models took to the catwalk.

To top it off, men.style.com



Ferry's signature style has influenced designers such as Dries Van Noten. CHRIS DUNLOP/EMI

**I've always loved fashion and I'm glad it loves me back.**

Bryan Ferry

recently featured Ferry's Top 10 essential must-haves (a greatest style hits that included Berluti shoes and Dunhill shirts) and deemed his singing style "as rakish as his wardrobe."

Ferry, who is currently touring Europe and Russia, is tickled by all the new-found attention. "I've always loved fashion and I'm glad it loves me back," he says. "It's the job of a proper pop star to

dress for the part. The fact that the suits and shirts I was wearing in the late seventies and early eighties are now being worn today is flattering. Since men's clothing is boring and tends to repeat itself every 10 years, I don't think I will ever be out of style for long."

Considering that California rock group Division Day is getting famous by covering Roxy Music number ones

such as *More Than This* (the group just hit campus radio charts with Ferry's ditty), being out of date doesn't seem to be a problem Ferry will have to face any time soon.

But what does he think of today's artists relying on trendy stylists for their image?

"It's a shame that nowadays singers have stylists dictating everything ... [style is] very personal.

"With regards to Roxy Music, the vision was part of the art. It still is for me," he explains. "I regard fashion as an important type of theatre. When I am in Paris for the shows, I always try to make a Galliano couture show. It's a wonderful spectacle you can learn from. Especially when clothes are being taken to the finest level. Actually, after we finish talking I will be doing my own fittings at Savile Row."

For more evidence that Ferry is a bona fide fashion lover – besides the fact that three of his ex-wives were supermodels (Amanda Lear, Jerry Hall and Lucy Helmore) – one need only turn to the bookshelves this month. A new hardcover called *Re-make/Re-model: Art, Pop, Fashion and the Making of Roxy Music*, published by Faber & Faber and written by pop scholar Michael Bracewell, spells out just how influential Ferry's tails have been – on and off the runway.

The book dives into the intricacies of the singer's creative partnership with renowned British clothing designer Antony Price and how the two of them worked together to create some of the pop star's most iconic images. "It's a very good book, actually," Ferry says. "I wouldn't have allowed myself to be interviewed for hours on end if I didn't trust the author so much. He's a brilliant art critic. Most books about Roxy Music haven't been very precise. This one is."

The 426-page tribute to Ferry and his bandmates comes at a perfect time. The group – which also includes record impresario Brian Eno – is coordinating a full-on comeback for 2008, replete with a track list that includes collaborations with New York's dance-pop troupe Scissor Sisters.

"The Roxy reunion disc is still in draft phases, but we have decided to do it and have worked with the Scissor Sisters because they are clever, fun and great musicians. It will be a long, drawn out process, but it will hopefully be good," Ferry says.

And hey, if all else fails, at least he'll always look the part.

» Special to The Globe and Mail