

RUSS BALLARD

official
NEWSLETTER



(Banner by Sven Kramer)

November already!!! Welcome to new readers.

Please join in. We need and very much welcome your contributions to this newsletter. Thank you to all those who have sent me stories, photos and questions so far. If you have ever met Russ, tell us about it. If you have a Russ story that doesn't involve meeting him, we would like to have that too. Tell us why you are a Russ fan. We have had some very interesting questions over the months. Keep them coming in. Tell us why you signed up for this newsletter. Anything Russ related!

Don't forget you can hear Russ on the radio on MAR, Merseyland Alternative Radio. <http://www.mar.me.uk/index2.html> Paul Jay's programme is on Sundays at 4pm with his famous "Russ slot" at 5pm. Sometimes, though, Paul plays tracks at other times so you need to listen to the whole show. I know several newsletter readers listen to Paul regularly. He will play any request too.

[I have been having trouble putting photos into the newsletter. Some of you could have received newsletters in the past with the photos in the wrong place or with a repeat of the same photo. I have taken advice about this and it seems that it is partly to do with the fact that I am using Outlook and partly to do with whatever the receiver uses. If everything always looks fine to you, that is great. If not, many apologies. If anyone can

help, that would be appreciated. For now, I will put the photos in as attachments and hope that works.]

Sue

From Russ: *"I want to thank people that sent me birthday messages...there were some great things....it's good having a birthday on Halloween....the kids turned up wearing painted faces and skeleton and Ghost outfits.....Karis had plastic cobwebs and bats hanging from the ceiling, at least, I don't think they were real."*

NEWS/THIS MONTH....

It was good to see Colin Blunstone again... he came over last week. We sat in the studio and I played him a song I wrote for him...[must be two years ago] - I wanted to explain certain ideas I had for staging the song. It contains a guitar solo at the end of each chorus....I believe it could be an amazing stage song. It's funny I've known Colin since the sixties and it's very seldom we've seen each other without four or five other people around, so, it was good to talk about life.....We went to my local Italian restaurant and discussed the Zombies, Colin's solo things, American tours, playing Japan and family life.

[Sue: I saw Colin last Friday and he said it's a great song!]

David Courtney also came over again - he'd played me some songs he's written for a project and asked if I had thoughts on them....I said I liked what he played me, although, one, a song with a spiritual lyric, could be more... 'Majestic', was the word I used....So I suggested some changes, which Dave likes...I told Dave I really like his lyrics....he said, "It's strange, I never wrote the words before.....It was always Leo [Sayer] who wrote our lyrics"

"My son Christian and his friend Arno have been working with Alesha Dixon and together, they've come up with a couple of cracking songs and they asked if I'd like to help with a ballad they'd started.....We finished it over a couple of days and it's very strong....I think! - What a great girl she is!! Pretty grounded, too."

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

'Thought For The Month' - Karma.....

You get back what you give....If we're caring to people, people will be caring in return.....If we're aggressive....people will usually be aggressive back....If we give Love, we get Love....It seems obvious, although, it's good to be reminded...Anyway, that's how it's been in my life...

YOUR QUESTIONS

My Question: In the German magazine BRAVO (the most known magazine for the youth) I read in an old issue of spring 1976 that 'Russ is fed up with writing songs for others. Background is the huge success of Hello, especially in Germany'. Their appearance in DISCO' 75 on the 6th of December with New York Groove (also ABBA got on stage on that day) and the success in several charts (in Northrhein-Westfalia they got Nr. 1 in both radio charts on WDR2!) were the reason for Russ's statement. In fact, Hello's next Top 20 hit after "Star Studded Sham" was written by Richard Myhill and Phil Wainman.

Nevertheless, one year later in 1977, Russ must have written a song for Hot Chocolate: "So you win again" scored number 1 in the UK in summer that year. Why did Russ renege on his 'promise'?

Best wishes from Germany,
Markus Linten

Russ: "Wow, 1976? Hi, Markus - I don't remember saying "I'm fed up with writing songs for others"The thing is, I never really wrote many songs for other artists.....I usually wrote for me and it just so happened others recorded them.

Regarding 'Hot Chocolate' and 'So You Win Again', I actually wrote that for myself. I made what I thought was a good demo of the song and played it to the head of Epic Records in the UK...Maurice Oberstein and I suggested to him I should record the song....his reply shook me a little, he said, it's too 'Soully' you should give it to a black group. I thought, If the head of my record company doesn't think it's right for me....What's the point of recording it?

I was convinced 'So You Win Again' was a hit song....it's one of those things."

RECORDED BY OTHERS

It seems appropriate that we have this one...Hot Chocolate - So You Win Again

<http://youtu.be/Kw8vw55GzhU>

Released in June 1977, after 15 hits, this song gave Hot Chocolate their only UK no. 1. It was the single from their album "Every 1s a Winner". Written by Russ and produced by Micky Most, it spent three weeks at the top in the UK in July 1977, reached high chart positions in many other

countries and no. 31 in the Billboard Hot 100 chart in the US. It was used on the soundtrack for the 1997 British film, *Metroland*.

FOLLOW UP

Last month we told you about the reception to launch Sada Vidoo's new album, *A Story With No End*, co-written by Russ, Sada and Christian. Russ: *"It was a great event and people appeared stunned that a girl that looked like a doll could shout like that..."* [Sue: some of you might know this....Russ tells me that "shout" means "sing in a rock voice"] Sada's single from the album, *The Actress*, will be released on 16th November. See the attachment for a photo from the event.

(Photo by UMU Music)

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