

RUSS BALLARD

official **NEWSLETTER**



(Banner by Sven Kramer)

Once again, welcome to our new readers and thank you to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter. I realised, today, that this is our 30th issue!!

It would be great to hear from you, whether you have just joined us or whether you have been with us from the start. Please send your Russ story, your ideal set list, a review of It's Good To Be Here, a question (as many as you like), anything Russ related you might have found while searching the internet or just a letter saying whatever you would like to say.

Keep reading future newsletters for news about Russ's tour early next year. It is under preparation now! It will be happening!

Sue.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Russ: *'Thought For The Month' - 'Head in The Clouds'*

When I was young, my Dad sometimes used to say to me "You've got your head in the clouds, Boy," - Well, I always thought it was a good place to be..although, I know what he meant, I think he was telling me to "Come back to, 'NOW'" - I think he was saying, "Don't waste your life day dreaming, because whatever you're dreaming probably won't happen anyway" - Then years ago I heard Dan Millman say, "The best way to live is with your head in the clouds and your feet on the ground" - That sounds pretty good to me."

THIS MONTH....

Russ: *"July has been good - [except for the weather] - as usual I've been going in to the studio and amusing myself - Putting down song ideas and because I'm thinking about future 'live' shows, I've been playing a lot of guitar and refreshing my memory of the song arrangements - [of course, I have songs from the new album to learn]"*

Peter and Tom Ross - [From UMU music] - came over and filmed me for their site. I played a bit of piano and picked winners of the recent UMU competition.

Three weeks ago I had dinner in Highgate with my friends Richard Desmond and Greg Lake..Richard is owner of Express Newspapers and OK Magazine..Greg is, of course, 'Super Bassist and Vocalist' from ELP. For the last ten years we've been a part of 'The Crusaders', raising funds for The Teenage Cancer Trust.[along with Roger Daltrey, Simon Townshend, Zoot Money, Steve Smith - and including [sometimes] - Robert Plant and Lulu].

When Richard, Greg and I get together it's always a good laugh..Greg sent me a text the next morning, suggesting we record the conversations we have on the music industry..I guess it would be interesting..[although I think it might call for some language editing] -

I don't know how many of you watch Sky Arts, they have some good stuff..the other day they showed 'La Boheme' - That music of Puccini is so passionate..I felt worn out after it had finished..Brilliant stuff! - I have felt in the past, there's been no Rock singer that's 'tapped in to that style..the only one I can think of is Roy Orbison.'Only The Lonely' and 'It's Over'. He had that vocal range.

I went to the Cricket at Lords....It was Lords Taverners V. Centrepoint - A fund raising event for the Centrepoint Charity It was a lunch then auction. Peter & Tom Ross invited me along with Toms girlfriend, Lara...Angela Rippon was the auctioneer. Chris Tarrant was captain of L T. - I don't know who won, we left before the finish...it was something different.

My good friend Michael Bisping is coming to London next week and we've arranged to meet - Michael is head of ASS Concert Promotion - He's organizing shows in Germany for next Spring. I'm looking forward to that...Southern Germany is a great place to be in April. While Michael is here, we're talking with Promoter Don Mcay - he's organizing shows in the UK.

Wherever you are this month - Holidays - Working or Chilling, I wish you all well and I hope there won't be too many clouds to have our heads in!!

Love,

Russ"

INTERVIEW

Russ did an interview with David Randall of Get Ready To Rock Radio, which was broadcast in two parts on 26th July and 2nd August. I am not sure how well these links will work but you should be able to hear, at least, some of the interviews here. They might be available for a limited time.

<https://www.mixcloud.com/grtr/the-songwriters-russ-ballard-part-1-26-july-2015/>

<https://www.mixcloud.com/grtr/the-songwriters-russ-ballard-part-2-2-august-2015/>

ALBUM REVIEW

A review by David Randall of Get Ready To Rock

The recent return of Russ Ballard - initially with Argent (reforming in 2010/13) - has been one of great rejoicing and relief. He was perhaps thought to be exiled forever in some L.A. mansion spending his dotage peeling grapes and banking the latest royalty cheque for 'God Gave Rock And Roll To You'.

In truth, Russ has never really left the UK and never stood still. Looking 20 years younger than his near-septuagenarian status he can probably "cut it" more than many of his contemporaries. He made a string of so-so solo albums in the seventies (peaking with 'At The Third Stroke' in 1978) and his last release was nearly a decade ago - the excellent 'Book Of Love' - which is scheduled for reissue soon. His latest album project - for the fledgling UMU Music company - is to be welcomed by his fans who - if they subscribe - will receive bonus material in the shape of exclusive content and merchandise.

As for the music? The listener will of course be swept along on a wave of nostalgia - Russ Ballard is BACK! There is no denying that the lead track 'Time Machine' has all the hallmarks - with a great chorus that will work its way into your head and a retro sixties vibe. But elsewhere, this does sound a fairly rudimentary rock album perhaps lacking an overall continuity.

I think (once the euphoria surrounding Russ' return has subsided) 'It's Good To Be Here' can be viewed as an interim statement, a sort of rekindling of the old flame. And while that flame still burns, the less committed need to investigate all albums from the mid-eighties starting with 'Russ Ballard'. Although - if we have no

right to expect another 'Liar' or 'You Can Do Magic' - a reworking of 'Voices' (from that 1984 album) really adds nothing but a slightly crazed guitar.

'My Awakening', 'Free From Your Hold' and 'Kickin' The Can' show the direction the album might have taken - as in a more full-on and consistent rock workout. The excellent 'Colliding' is counterbalanced by the weaker 'Where Were You' which could have been an Ian Hunter outtake and ditto 'The First Man That Ever Danced' and 'Proud Man'. Throughout, there are some nice production touches which keep things sounding contemporary and relevant.

The UMU venture, though, has to be applauded and brings fans closer to the artists they love. In this sense, punters buy into more than the just the music of their hero or heroine - it's a more complete package that lets them in to a more rounded artistic world. And it is Russ' core fan base who will lap this up and fan those flames for his next adventure. ****

YOUR QUESTIONS

Having read the reviews for the new album, It's Good To Be Here, I wonder if Russ could tell us his inspiration for each of the tracks.

Russ:

'My Awakening' - *I suppose I was imagining being awoken by an inspirational kiss. Originally, I had the line "Your kiss is my Awakening" - It all developed from that.*

'Time Machine' - *I was thinking how great it would be to go back to the past and meet Loved Ones, Friends and others - I wonder how much we would change, if we could.*

'Collidin' - *I had the idea of relationships colliding. I guess it's a new way of saying.. "You and me are not getting on too well" - It's a common theme for many*

'Where Were You?' - *Another 'Suffering inside a relationship' song. - "When I cried out for you - Where were you then?"*

'Kickin' The Can' - *Going back to the beginning of the credit crunch of 2008, I kept hearing financial journalists using the term "Kicking The Can further down the the road" - I thought it was a great title for a song, only, I decided to make it more emotional, not financial.*

'The First Man That Ever Danced' - *I don't know where that came from, although, I know the title came first and I liked it.. Then I thought, "So, what lyric can I put with this title?" I often find a title, then think. OK Where now?*

'Proud Man' - *This is quite an inspiring subject for me and it's again, a very common problem in relationships. we're often too proud to say sorry, too proud*

to be ordinary - [it seems no body wants to be ordinary] - You know, sometimes we'll ruin a good situation and often walk away from something potentially special because of too much pride. In the end. I think fear is behind most of it..Fear of not looking tough and Fear of being hurt..

'Voices' - This was the first thing I recorded. When Peter Ross started UMU Music, he asked if I had anything I could put on line, I thought I could re-record this song differently. So, I connected a Digital Delay line to the guitar and played to the 'Echo' - I never intended to make an album, however, after getting to know Peter more and also realising I had a few ideas for songs, I decided to make the album and I must say, I've enjoyed this as much as anything

*I've ever done..
Thanks everybody."*

PERFORMED BY OTHERS

Thanks to Yoshiko via Facebook, here is a performance of I Surrender by a Japanese pop singer. Hideki Saijō, born April 13, 1955 in [Hiroshima](#), is a famous [Japanese](#) singer and television celebrity. His career has already lasted over 3 decades. He's had massive hits with a Japanese version of Village People's YMCA and, just before his 85th single was to be released in 2003, he suffered a stroke that took him 3 years to recover from. In 2006 he made a come back with his 86th single "Meguriai".

It is a long video but the relevant bit is between approx 1:20 and 4:20.
Fun!

<https://youtu.be/EYgFfnfexXY>

If anyone finds one of Russ's songs performed by another artist, any artist, please send me a link and I will include it in the newsletter.

RECORDED BY OTHERS

Bert Heerink is a Dutch musician, mainly known as singer of the Dutch [hard rock band Vandenberg](#) but later going solo. Russ's song, Panic Attack was the first single from Bert's 2009 album, Better Yet. Panic Attack entered the Dutch Top 40 chart in March 2010, staying there for 15 weeks and reaching #9.

<https://youtu.be/45Fm42YHoi8>

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