



(Header by Sven Kramer)

A big welcome to all our new readers. We would love to hear from you. Russ's Facebook page is going very well. If about another 20 people 'like' it, it will reach a nice round number of 4000 so if you haven't been over there yet, why not have a look and give it a like. There are some brilliant videos on there. Has anyone seen the new film 'Nativity Rocks'? It features Since You Been Gone sung by lots of children. That song goes on and on... This month Dave's article is about God Gave Rock and Roll To You, another much used song. There are several links to different versions and it is surprising how this song sparks off so much discussion in the comments on most of them. I hope you all have a brilliant Christmas and we will see you back here in the new year.
Sue

(Just a note.....Outlook has had another change and is now enforcing its limit of 300 emails a day. This means that I will have to split the mailing list up and send on different days. If you know someone else has got theirs but you haven't, please give it a couple of days and then contact me.)

THIS MONTH

Russ: *"Hi everyone....Christmas with us again, eh! Ten days ago, I got together with the other Roulettes for lunch at 'Zero' my local Italian in Ware...We call it The Roulettes Christmas firms 'Do' - We've been getting together regularly now for many years and it's always a lot of fun. Last year, our lovely friend, Jim Rodford came along - That was special.... he produced a diary from his pocket, believe it or not, it was a log of every gig he'd ever played from, I'm sure he said, 1960....Bob H. Can correct me if I'm wrong....That log contained all his gigs with his first group 'The Bluetones' - 'The Mike Cotton Sound' - Argent - with Rod, Bob and myself, then there were the twenty years with The Kinks....Amazing!! - However, Dear Jim, in his days off, would play with 'The Organisers' - that band contained My great mates, Mod, my brother, Roy and originally, Dave Groves on drums...When Dave left, Mick Avory played regularly. When Mick was on one of his golfing trips, I played his drums....Actually, Jim would play with anyone, if they asked him....He just loved music....I never got around to look at Jim's diary, we were too busy nattering about 'The Old Days'At Zero's The Roulettes toasted Jim's life....Oh, what could be better than celebrating with good food, good wine, with the ones you love....Especially at Christmas! - I wish you all a Happy Christmas and everything good in 2019....Love, Russ"*

VIDEO

I know we have a lot of readers who are not on Facebook and might have missed this one so I am putting it here as it is well worth seeing. Russ with The Barnet Dogs in 1980.

<https://youtu.be/4GdFapnQfI4>

RUSS'S MUSIC HISTORY

From Dave Williams

God Gave Rock and Roll to Youand that's the Truth!

In a few days' time I will be attending a gig at the Flowerpot in Derby, one of the venues that hosted **Russ Ballard** and his band last year. This time I will be watching an English blues band called **Nine Below Zero**, more on this later.

As far as rock anthems go, **God Gave Rock and Roll to You** by **Argent** has to be up there with the best. It featured as the opening song on their **In Deep** album released in 1973 and took them back into the charts when it was released as a single. Though not quite reaching the heights of **Hold Your Head Up**, which reached No.5 on both sides of the Atlantic, it made the Top 20 peaking at No.18 in the UK. It was pleasing to note that whilst their first hit was credited to the songwriting team of Argent/White, though we now know ex-Zombie **Chris White** played the greater part, this latest hit came from the pen of **Russ Ballard**, the other songwriter in the Argent camp. Right from their earliest recordings their music was either written by Argent and White or **Russ Ballard**. Though I'm sure all four members helped to develop the original ideas at the recording studio, the band benefited from having three songwriters at their disposal, all with their own style. I say three because although Argent and White would be credited as co-writers, like Lennon and McCartney, songs were largely written by one or the other. **In Deep** probably saw the band peaking in the studio. As Russ stated on the sleeve notes, the songs came together quite quickly. There would be one more album created by the three writers, **Nexus** in 1974. By this time the band were showing signs of being pulled in two directions, **Russ** continuing to produce punchy short numbers or delicate ballads with hit single potential whilst Rod began to experiment with lengthier synthesizer inspired instrumental work. More Rod, less Chris, I guess. It shouldn't be overlooked that **Russ** was also responsible for writing Argent's third hit single **Tragedy**, which reached No.34 in the UK and was sandwiched between the two bigger hits. However, it was **God Gave Rock and Roll to You** that put **Argent** firmly back in the spotlight. In the years that have followed, the song is still covered by artists to this day. There have been some interesting interpretations.

So, what does this have to do with Nine Below Zero? Well, back in 1988 I happened to hear a cover version of **God Gave Rock and Roll to You** on the airwaves. The artist was **Dennis Greaves and the Truth** and as I couldn't get hold of the single at the time, I opted to buy the album, **Jump**. Such is the difference in style between Dennis Greaves and the Truth and Nine Below Zero, it was only recently that I made the connection between Dennis Greaves of Nine Below Zero and Dennis Greaves of the Truth, and found them to be one and the same. In fact, Nine Below Zero existed before Dennis formed The Truth. For years he has

focussed on Nine Below Zero creating a large following, though he has been known to occasionally bring The Truth back to life for occasional gigs. Here is a link to their version of the Argent hit posted on You Tube by Rowan Jackson from an old VHS recording. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nitb5qL3Ya4>



[God gave rock and roll - The Truth](#)

Saved from a rotting VHS - not great quality but probably unique!

www.youtube.com

This wasn't the first cover of the song. In 1977 a Christian rock band called **Petra** adapted the words in their version featured on their **Come and Join Us** album. It was seen as controversial and revolutionary at the time, especially by conservative members of the church. Seen as pioneers in Christian rock, **Petra**, formed in 1972, called time on their career in 2006 although they still re-assemble for occasional anniversary re-unions. You can't keep a good band down! Their style was similar to **The Eagles**, with a big emphasis on strong vocal harmonies. You can listen to their version of the **Argent** classic by following this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9OYfCRXC5k>



[Petra - God Gave Rock and Roll to You](#)

Chek my blog to find more Petra songs and learn about the next step of this huge proyect. <http://unknownpetrafan.blogspot.com/> Visita mi blog para encontrar más ...

www.youtube.com

Now let's get the most successful cover version out of the way. I'm referring to **God Gave Rock and Roll to You II** by USA rockers **Kiss**. The one thing about this version that irritates **Argent** and **Russ Ballard** fans is that so many people assume that **Kiss** wrote the song. Some even think it was **Argent** that covered it. As **Rod**

Argent always points out at his gigs “but we did it first”. **Kiss** and their producer re-wrote some of the lyrics, adding their names to the songwriting credits. They gave poor **Cliff Richard** the chop as had **Petra** previously, and took the song to No.4 in the UK, with strong sales in other parts of the world. They undoubtedly helped to bring the song to the attention of a new generation, and topped up a few pension pots, including those of Paul Stanley, Gene Simmons and producer Bob Ezrin. The song, which can be seen here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQRYVsqVT3M>



[Kiss - God Gave Rock And Roll To You II - HQ Music Video 1991 ...](#)

Revenge 1992(Eric Carr)
www.youtube.com

featured on the soundtrack of the film **Bill & Ted’s Bogus Journey**, which I’ve yet to see as I’m not convinced it would appeal to me. I’m more **Spinal Tap**.



Another Christian rock band called **Bride** created an interesting cover in 1993. Hailing from Kentucky they joined up with a hip-hop artist called D.O.C. to create a rock meets hip-hop version. Does it work? You decide. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbAfdqMzYQI>



[Bride - God gave rock roll to you](#)

Um super clip da banda de rock cristã - Bride
www.youtube.com

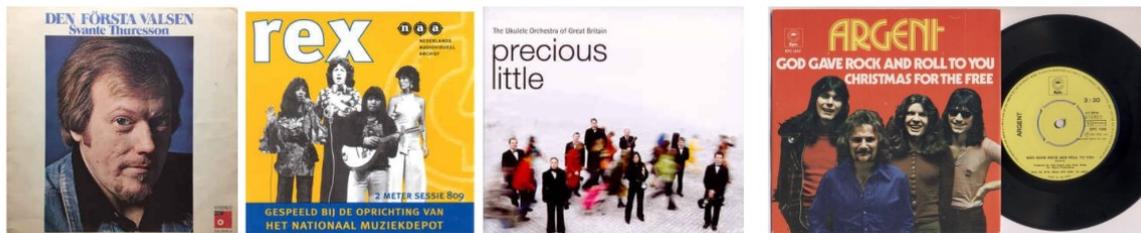
Not surprisingly there is a ukulele version. This is by the **Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain**, which featured on their 1997 album *Precious Little*. I've yet to hear this.

Such is the strength of the song; cover versions have appeared from across the globe. From Brazil we have a version by **Oficina G3**, a Petra inspired Christian rock band. We have the Kiss version covered by **Parte Del Asunto** from Argentina, a Swedish cover by **Svante Thuresson**, a Dutch cover from **Rex** and another American version from a band called **Unrest** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LA2EB2uyUrQ>



[Unrest - God Gave Rock'n'Roll To You 1992 - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LA2EB2uyUrQ)

"God Gave Rock'n'Roll To You" by Unrest, from the "Bavarian Mods And Other Hits" 7" single.
www.youtube.com



One of the good things about You Tube is that anyone can post, so we also have some interesting amateur versions. The next generation recognises a good tune when they hear one. I think a little bit more work is needed on this one, though full marks for the idea.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_4Lfd3R2cs



[Dany, Pau & Ale playing "God Gave Rock and Roll to You"](#)

Visit our new webpage !! <http://thewarningband.com/> Sisters Dany (Guitar & Main Vocal, 12yrs old), Pau (Drums & Main Vocal, 10yrs old) and Ale (Bass & Chorus, 7yrs ...

www.youtube.com

Here's another amateur using a "banjolele", presumably the love child of a banjo and ukulele. This guy announced he was covering a Kiss song. Inevitably he was soon corrected by an Argent fan in the comment's column. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2ltUxn5ZaU>



[God Gave Rock and Roll to You - ukulele KISS cover](#)

Here's a cover of the KISS song, "God Gave Rock and Roll to You" on my banjolele (or banjo ukulele, if you prefer). I am not a KISS fan, but I do love Bill & Ted's ...

www.youtube.com

We can't leave out the comedians. I'm sure **Russ** won't mind this band's injection of humour. I can see **Mod Rogan** enjoying this. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ocrhTpmRgDU>.



[God Gave Sausage Rolls to You](#)

Pastry sausage snacks are a beautiful little miracle too.

www.youtube.com

I continue to stumble across other cover versions, though amazingly **God Gave Rock and Roll to You** is not the most covered **Russ Ballard** song, as I will discuss in a future article.

QUESTION

What's the story behind the single "Some Kinda Hurricane b/w You Can Do Voodoo"? The single was released on 4th February 1977, as far as I know. Was the song a left-over track from the "Winning" recording sessions? Or does it come from a different session? Was it designed as a sign of life between two albums?

Did it see any chart action? The single I own was printed in the UK. Was it printed anywhere else, too?

I quite like the song – it's a bit more aggressive than the songs on "Winning" – could that be the reason why it wasn't included on that album?

Russ: *"'Some kinda Hurricane' was a tune I had while finishing my first album...I remember recording a demo at CBS Studios - (Where I made my first solo album) - I thought the song had potential. What was in my head didn't quite make it in on to tape... Phil Wainman liked the demo and asked if he could produce the song at his studio...Utopia - I agreed - it was OK, but wasn't special enough. "You Can Do Voodoo" was the 'B' side and a song from the first solo album...I hope that answers your question."*

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

Whilst writing my articles I've discovered scores of versions of songs written by Russ, some well-known, others less so. It started to become something of a quest to discover as many songs as possible. There's lots of material out there and I thought it might be nice to share some of these discoveries with readers. Here's this month's offering:

No.5



Can't we talk it over? by Clout

Clout were an all-female rock band formed in South Africa in 1977. They gained fame with their 1978 single **Substitute**, a Righteous Brothers cover, which was a worldwide hit and reached No.2 in the UK. Some will know that a year earlier they released their version of Russ's **Since You Been Gone**, one of many artists to cover the song.

Clout recorded a second Russ Ballard song. **Can't We Talk It Over** appeared as the final track on their 1981 album **A Threat and a Promise**. This was the same year that the group disbanded, which may be the reason why the song fell by the wayside as, to me, it sounds like it could have been a potential single. You can find the song by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OShKvAzdKIo>



[Clout - Can't We Talk It Over \(Vinyl\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OShKvAzdKIo)

1980 A Threat And A Promise

www.youtube.com