



(Header by Sven Kramer)

Welcome to our new readers. Please feel free to contribute to the newsletter.

Excitement is growing! We are looking forward to seeing even more of you than last year at the RB Experience on 6th April. Arrangements are well under way. We have several readers in Portugal and Russ has some very good news for them. We in the UK, and in other parts of the world, are very envious!

Dave has been doing some research into Russ's compilation albums released in various parts of the world. You would never guess how many there are. Have a go before you open the attachment to access the chart that Dave has put together for us. If you want to buy some of Russ's back catalogue, all the information is there to help you make a choice.

Looking forward to seeing some of you soon.

Sue

THIS MONTH

Russ: *"My dear friend, D.J. and Concert Promoter, Emanuel, asked me a few months ago, if I'd like to play another concert in his home town, Lisbon - I'd played there twice before for him and the shows were very special... (He told me, they would be, if I would come). This time, the show is to be at The Casino, the main venue in the city, Emanuel said. The audiences in*

Lisbon help a great deal because they know my songs and sing along to them...it's a great atmosphere!

On the night of the first show Emanuel introduced his wonderful family to me and they're incredibly warm people, so, I'm looking forward to seeing them again....The show will be on 25th May - maybe I'll see you there? Come and say hello.

(Poster by Nuno Xlv)

I hope I'll see you at The Southern Maltings, on Saturday 6th April - for another RB Ware

Experience. We have some great people playing...some friends that have 'been there'all my life and some that are very new to me...It should be a 'Hoot'. The Maltings is a great space and the people are planning to turn the several rooms into a dance studio, an art studio, a museum and a restaurant, which hopefully, will be The Hub of Ware. So, if you didn't come last year...come...you'll have a great night.

Lots of Love to Everyone, 👍🎵🦋x"

RB EXPERIENCE '19 🎉🎉🎉

Plans for this year's party are well underway. If you would like to come but haven't let me know yet, please let me have your name(s) as soon as possible. The guest list will close when we have reached the maximum number allowed by the venue. You need to be on the list to get your tickets. Tickets are numbered and named. I have made an email contact list for those who are on the party list and further information will only go out to that contact list. If you are on the party list but haven't received any information, please let me know. The party is exclusively for you, the newsletter readers, and Russ's friends and family. Please don't mention it on the FB page just yet.

For those who were at last year's party, here is a little reminder. For those who are coming for the first time, this is what it was like. Russ wasn't well but struggled through! With thanks to Sven for the compilation video.

<https://youtu.be/6Z6PTXyOY34>

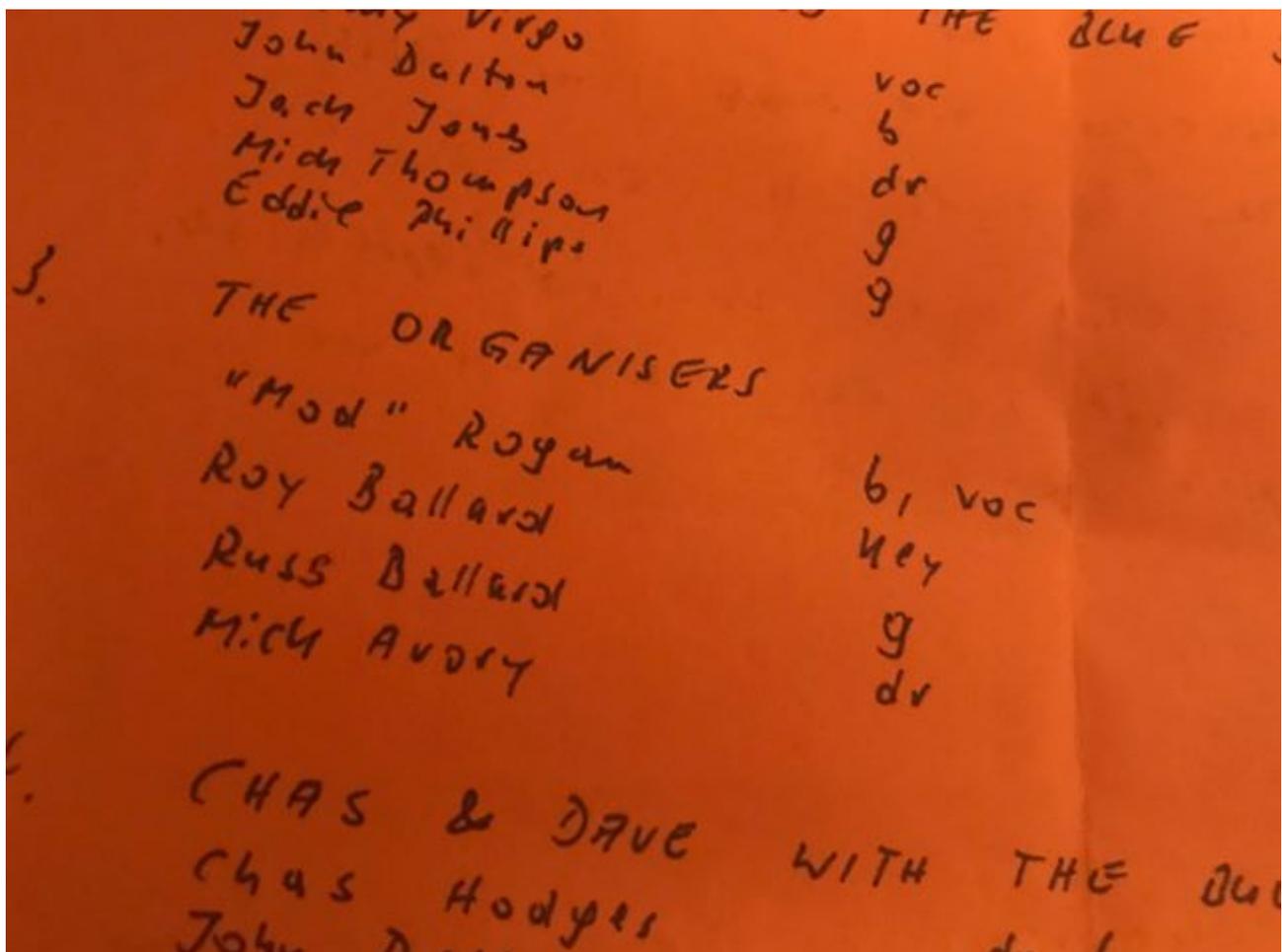
ROULETTES FACEBOOK PAGE

I know a lot of our readers are Roulettes fans. Our reader, Eddy Bonte has started a Facebook page dedicated to them. Have a look at it here. Maybe you will be able to contribute.

<https://www.facebook.com/theRoulettesUK/?epa>

QUESTION

"I was looking through some paperwork and came across this. I saw the **Organisers** once but Russ wasn't with them. Could he tell us something about the band?"



Russ: *"The Organisers was a group, formed a long time ago by my brother, Roy...He was a good organist and started the group with Dave Groves on drums and my old friend, Mod Rogan as 'Front Man' and Singer. The group existed from the late sixties until the early 2000's, playing functions, clubs, parties and weddings. When Dave left, they recruited various drummers. If Bob Henrit wasn't playing with Argent or The Kinks, he would sit on the drum stool. When he did join The Kinks, Mick Avory, took over on drums. Occasionally, my brother phoned me to tell me "Mick can't play the gig next week, will you play drums?" My reply was usually, " Tell Mick to leave the drums set up on the van". I found them easy to play but hard to set up. I didn't play the drums many times with The Organisers, maybe ten times - twelve?"*

The piece in the picture was a Nobby Dalton Charity, set up on the death of his son, Matthew, to raise funds for Leukaemia research...I think we performed at The Charity for many years. This particular one had Chas and Dave, great friends of ours. I think the year after this, Adam Faith performed and he loved it....

When my brother died in 1993, The Organisers still had a lot gigs in the diary, so I said to Mod I'd take Roy's place until he found a keyboard player...I ended up playing many Saturday nights with him and Mick or Bob on drums....We always had a lot of fun..."

RUSS'S MUSIC HISTORY

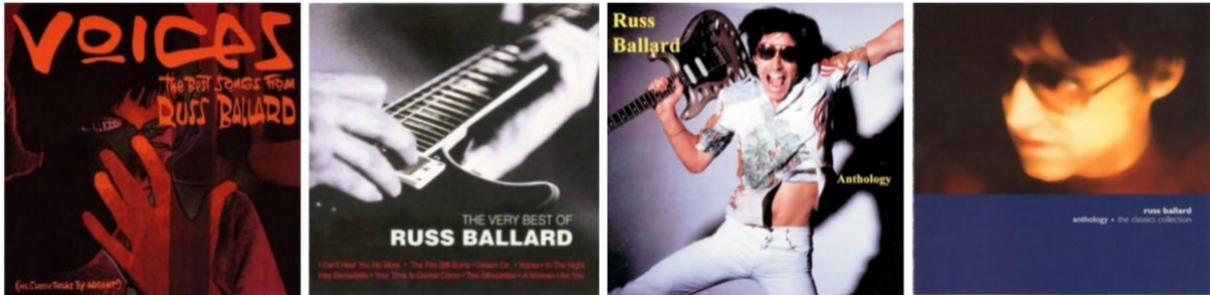
By Dave Williams

Six of the best?

With many new readers on board, not all of whom have the complete works of **Russ Ballard** in their music collection, I thought it might be interesting to look at some of the compilation albums that are available.

I was aware of two or three compilation albums of **Russ's** music, as has been the case with his previous band **Argent**. It was only when I started to look them up that I discovered at least eight have been released in recent years. These masquerade under various titles that inevitably include words like collection, anthology and gold. They are not necessarily universal releases, some might be Country specific, but the beauty of the internet means that these releases can

quite easily pop up on websites such as eBay or Amazon and purchased new or second hand. For those wishing to sample **Russ's** music, these are ideal. Here we look at some of the choices available, and I've put together a chart that can be used to quickly compare track lists, which might prove useful for potential buyers.



Voices – The Best Songs from Russ Ballard – EMI Germany

This 1993 compilation from EMI contains 16 tracks. The label suggests that this would consist of tracks taken from the two EMI America albums, and whilst the most popular songs from these are included, **Voices** also features four **Argent** songs including **Liar** and **Tragedy**, and four songs from **Russ's** time with Epic Records, including **Since You Been Gone**. All songs written by **Russ** with the exception of **Hold Your Head Up**.

The Very Best Songs of Russ Ballard – EMI Portugal

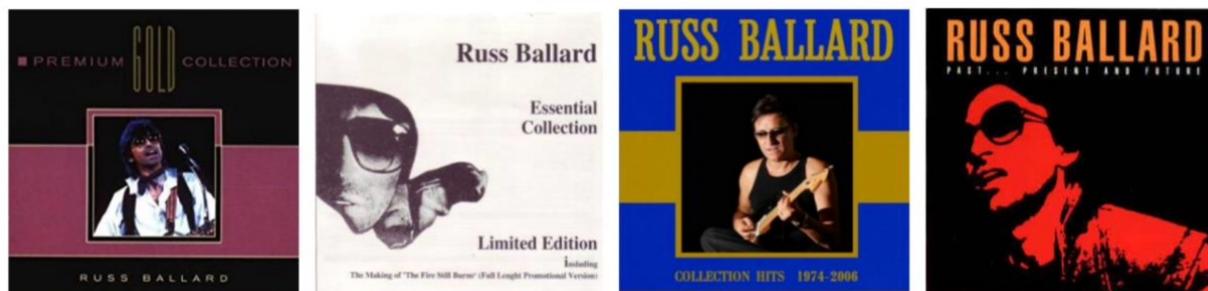
Released in 2001 this CD features 9 songs taken from the EMI America albums **Russ Ballard** and **The Fire Still Burns**. This means there are no songs included from his years with Epic. With such a small track listing, it doesn't offer the best value compared to some of the other collections listed here.

Anthology – Renaissance Records

This 2003 release uses the artwork from the **Barnet Dogs** album **Into the Fire**. The 18 tracks feature a good cross-section of songs taken from the Epic and EMI America albums. Most of the songs have been previously been released as singles but one exception is the inclusion of **Ghost Inside**, which many won't know.

Anthology – The Classics Collection – Burning Airlines

This appears to be an identical release to the Renaissance Anthology release above. The only difference appears to be the sleeve design.



The Gold Collection – EMI UK & Europe

For those who didn't buy either of the two EMI America albums, this CD compilation is for you. It's a straight re-issue of the **Russ Ballard (1984)** and **The Fire Still Burns** albums.

Essential Collection – Limited Edition

A US 2005 collection, this release features an interview with **Russ** at Abbey Road Studios and describes the making of **The Fire Still Burns**. It also carries nine songs including **Danger Zone Pt II**, **Kicks** and **Fly Away** from the first solo album released in 1975. There are a couple of tracks from the **Barnet Dogs** LP and the remainder are EMI America era songs, one of which is **Voices** of course.

Collection Hits 1974 – 2006 - EMI, VK Records

Well.....how about this one? 52 songs by **Russ Ballard** in a 3CD set. Even I wish I had this one. Its content is lifted from all of Russ's albums from his debut 1975 album through to **Book of Love**. It also includes **God Gave Rock & Roll to You** plus one or two non-album songs such as **Living Without You** and **Ghost Inside**. A very good cross-representation of Russ's solo career.

So, six collections of "best of" bearing in mind the **Anthology** is released under two titles. The attached chart gives more details of the track listings.

Past, Present and Future

I did say there are eight compilations. The last one is called **Past, Present and Future** and will probably be hard to find. It features some of the past songs that **Russ** wrote and / or performed on, plus some of the hits he wrote for other artists. Disc one features artists such as **Santana (Winning)**, **Three Dog Night (Liar)**, **America (You Can Do Magic)** and **Hello (New York Groove)** plus many more, alongside his own recordings of **The Fire Still Burns** and **Voices**. A disc of hits! Disc Two is titled **Present and Future** and features 11 songs that will be new to most of us. I have to credit Sven Kramer for bringing this collection to my attention. Sven is the font of all knowledge when it comes to **Russ Ballard** and his music. Sven shares much of this knowledge through the excellent **Russ Ballard website** that he set up and manages. If you haven't already done so, please pay a visit.

<http://www.russballardmusic.com>

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[russballardmusic.com](http://www.russballardmusic.com) - The official page for news, updates, music and history of Russ Ballard

www.russballardmusic.com

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.8



Can't break the habit by Helen Shapiro

Born in Bethnal Green, London in 1946, **Helen Shapiro** sprung to fame aged 14 years old as Britain's youngest chart topper. Her second single **You Don't Know** reached No.1, improving on her previous release **Don't Treat Me Like a Child**, which reached No.3. Her third hit, **Walking Back to Happiness**, also hit No.1 and is probably the song for which she is best known. Further hits would follow including **Tell Me What He Said**, which reached No.2 and **Little Miss Lonely**, peaking at No.8 in 1962. The Beatles actually supported her on their first British tour. This heralded the arrival of the beat boom and Helen's popularity would soon slip away as the record buying public turned towards a new generation of female singers including **Lulu**, **Sandy Shaw**, **Dusty Springfield** and of course Liverpool's **Cilla Black**. Helen turned to acting, although she did continue working for many years as a jazz singer with British trumpeter Humphrey Littleton's band.

A bid to resurrect her pop career, 1977 saw Helen record and release a **Russ Ballard** song titled **Can't Break the Habit**. It's a really nice uptempo song with a catchy chorus and a great vocal arrangement with Helen's characteristic voice to the fore. Unfortunately, there would be no fairy tale chart comeback. Once again it was probably due to timing. By 1977 Britain was already in the grip of the punk rock era and new wave was just around the corner waiting to take over. There was still room for traditional pop music, but competition was fierce with acts

such as **Abba** and **Blondie** fighting for chart places. To listen to the song, follow this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZ4mNDWd4zw>



[Helen Shapiro - Can't Break The Habit \(1977\)](#)

"Can't Break The Habit" is released as a single of Helen Shapiro in 1977.

www.youtube.com

As is often the case with **Russ Ballard** covers, there is another version by a band called **Pierce Arrow**, so this month it's two for the price of one....

Can't break the habit by Pierce Arrow



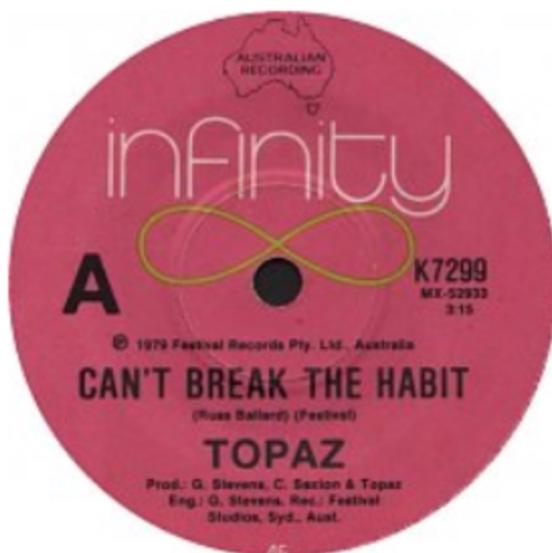
Pierce Arrow was a group made up top session players from New York and Los Angeles. Similar to **The Eagles** in style, they were relatively short-lived, recording two albums between 1977 and 1978. Sadly, I was unable to find any evidence of this recording on You Tube. Not to be defeated, I visited the Apple music store and lo and behold, both of the **Pierce Arrow** albums are available for purchase there. It is their second album, **Pity the Rich** that features **Russ's** song and it is possible to listen to a 30 second sample for free. I really like their rendition to the point where I was tempted into having a listen to their other self-penned songs. I have to say I like what I heard and there's no doubt whatsoever that they

were a very accomplished band. So, what went wrong? It appears that just as they were beginning to get noticed, one of their key members **Jeff Kent**, broke his neck in a swimming accident. He made a slow but full recovery but by the time he re-joined the band it was too late. It was already starting to disintegrate.

Two stories told, and the common denominator seems to relate to timing. Isn't it amazing how thin the line can be between success and failure, infamy and anonymity?

Oh no, wait a minute, I've tracked down another version. Three for the price of one. I'm spoiling you. It just goes to show, you can't keep a good song down!

Can't break the habit by Topaz



Not much to say on this one I'm afraid. It would appear that a gentleman called **Ron Gaydon** was behind **Topaz**, who hailed from Australia. Dated 1979, I've read that this was their only release and it is rare release according to the person trying to sell his copy on Australia's eBay! Funnily enough, that's exactly what the other guy selling one said too! Not daft these Aussies.

