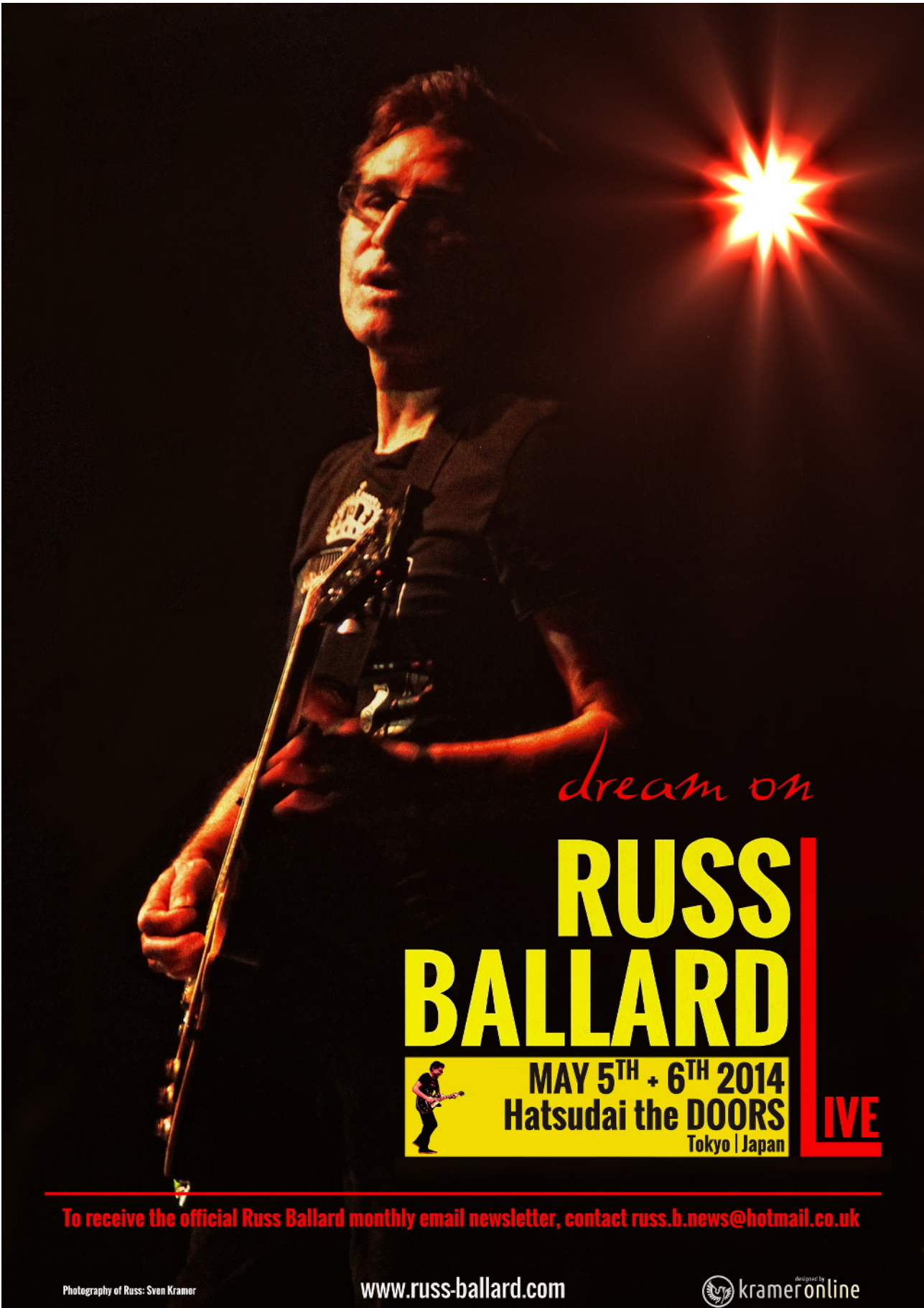




Just a couple of months now to the Tokyo gigs. I know some of the newsletter recipients are going. Yumi has sent a photo of her tickets and the flyer. Great tickets, I am sure you will agree!



Sven Kramer has produced some more great artwork to promote the Tokyo gigs. Please feel free to use the banner at the top of the page and the poster below. To see more of Sven's work, he has a Russ Ballard section on his website, recently updated, go to www.krameronline.eu



dream on

RUSS BALLARD



MAY 5TH + 6TH 2014
Hatsudai the DOORS
Tokyo | Japan

LIVE

To receive the official Russ Ballard monthly email newsletter, contact russ.b.news@hotmail.co.uk

Photography of Russ: Sven Kramer

www.russ-ballard.com



Designed by **krameronline**

To hear Russ on the radio you can't go wrong with MAR, Merseyland Alternative Radio, www.mar.me.uk Paul Jay has his Teatime show on Sundays, 4pm - 6pm. The Russ slot is on there every week. And now we have our very own Sven Kramer, also known as Mr X, on Sunday mornings (except the first Sunday in the month) at 10am. You are guaranteed to hear plenty of Russ on there too as well as a lot of other great music on both shows.

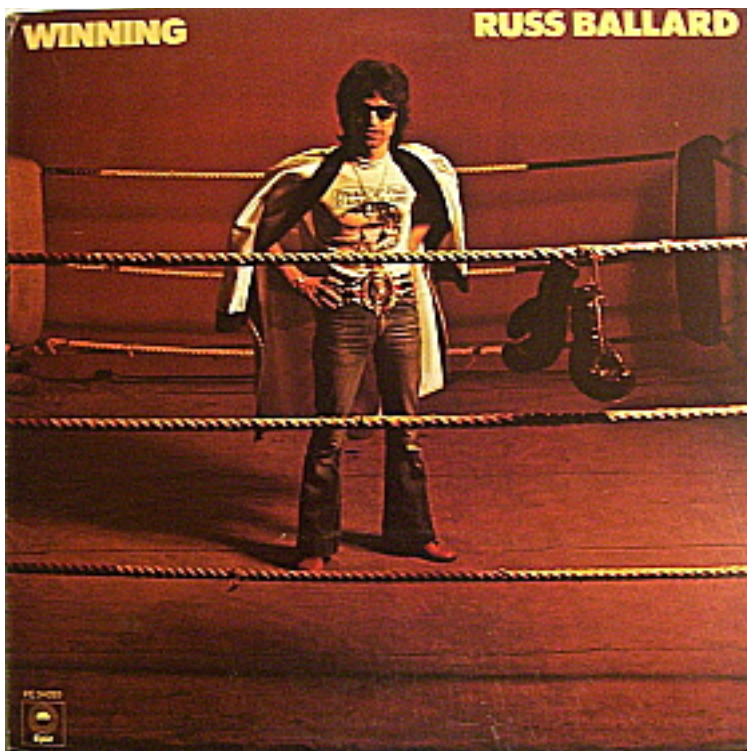
Russ has been very busy since Christmas working in the studio and preparing for the Tokyo gigs.

Don't forget, we would love to hear from you...stories, memories and questions. Please keep sending them in. This month we have a great story from Gareth Hughes. Were you at that gig?

Sue

YOUR QUESTIONS

My fave sleeve design is Winning with Russ wearing the coveted "Lonsdale Belt". It must have taken a lot of money or persuasion, or both, to secure the loan of the belt. Care to share any details?



"Graham Hughes was the photographer of 'Winning' - [He was the cousin of Roger Daltrey and did many of Roger and Leo Sayers album covers]. Graham had the Boxing ring idea and hired the Lonsdale belt....I remember he said he had to pay a lot of insurance, so, we were both conscious of looking after it..."

YOUR STORIES

From Gareth Hughes...all photos by Gareth.

Argent live at Manchester Academy III, 27th January 2012 – A Reminiscence



When I first read that the legendary Argent were to perform a relatively low-key gig in my hometown I immediately checked online that the event was indeed being held by the actual band.

I'd seen 'gigs' advertised for Cream and Coliseum in the past, fully expecting a power trio or a jazz rock combo, only to find it's a dance music club night. Once satisfied it was indeed Rod, Russ and co, I eagerly awaited the coming of the big night. I always try and collect autographs from my heroes, but as my vinyl collection was in storage, I could only find a few items pertaining to Argent around the house, including Russ' self-

titled 1984 CD and a nice cassette collection of vintage Argent. On the day of the gig, I stuffed these artefacts into my bag, but was bitterly disappointed to find that by showtime, the horrid winter rain had tarnished my album sleeves. Drat!

Support band The Jokers were exactly that – a sub-Spinal Tap-ish racket with corny party hardy lyrics and much throwing of heroic shapes without actually delivering anything in the way of power or melody. More about these over-enthusiastic lads later.

After a short intermission, the lights dimmed dramatically and the band Argent snuck into place onstage. Rod Argent was right in front of me, flanking an impressive bank of keyboards, with Jim Rodford, front and centre on bass. The intense 'The Coming Of Kohoutek' was a welcome surprise, with cymbal crescendos from drummer Bob Henrit increasing the drama. Could they be about to play the 'Encore' live album in its entirety, I fleetingly asked myself? Not quite, but the two 'It's Only Money's followed, with lean guitar work and sharp vocals from Russ Ballard, looking staggeringly young, completely the same in appearance as on the aforementioned 1984 LP!



The whole band seemed relaxed, especially Jim, who grinned his way through the entire gig, looking for all the world like David Jason on the brink of selling hooky gear from the back of his three wheeled motor!

Another favourite, 'Dance Of Ages' was up next, giving Rod Argent the chance to really stretch his legs on a particularly mesmerising, labyrinthine keyboard solo.

'Liar' always catches people out, with Russ spitting out the venomous lyrics in that famously unusual time signature. The chemistry between the band remained incredible throughout – an almost telepathic musicianship that really cannot be verbalised.

Next followed a rollicking rendition of the old Zombies fave 'She's Not There', before Russ unstrapped his trademark 'Holey' guitar (incidentally, Buck Dharma of Blue Oyster Cult has a similar axe, which he calls the Cheeseberger) and sat at the keyboard to tenderly croon 'I Don't Believe In Miracles', a nice change of pace.

The explosive set ended with a terrific triple-whammy of Ballard genius, comprising 'Since You've Been Gone', the singalong tune Rainbow charted with back in 1979, a bombastic 'Hold Your Head Up' and a suitably gonzo romp through 'God Gave Rock and Roll To You', rendering Kiss' version frankly laughable.

KOHOUTEK

IT'S ONLY MONEY PART 1

IT'S ONLY MONEY PART 2

KEEP ON ROLLING

REJOICE

DANCE OF AGES

BE FREE

SWEET MARY

LIAR

SHE'S NOT THERE

MIRACLES

SINCE YOU'VR BEEN GONE

HOLD YOUR HEAD UP

GOD GAVE R'N'R

All in all, this was easily one of the best gigs it's ever been my pleasure to witness. Top 5, no doubt about it!

Afterwards, I braved the elements at the stage door of the venue and sat quietly and patiently, waiting for the band to emerge. First out were support band The Jokers, who informed me that Rod Argent was sitting in the white transit van up ahead. I found this perfectly feasible, so approached the vehicle to be met by the rest of The Jokers, who, true to their name, laughed in my face. Hardy har har, lads. As their van disappeared into the night (pun probably intended), they threw out a stack of aluminium ashtrays which were then scattered all over the loading bay.

Shortly afterwards, a nice chap from the Argent entourage came out, asking who had flung all those ashtrays around the place. I told him it was The Jokers and he seemed to make a mental note of it. Probably clocking that I wasn't some rampaging hooligan, but actually a dedicated fan, he then asked whether I'd like to meet Rod, Russ, Jim and Bob. Would I? But of course!

I was then led up a warren of staircases and presented to the musicians in their relaxed dressing room, where they were enjoying a glass of red, après gig. I was offered some wine, which I politely declined, as I'd already had a few beers over the course of the evening and was quite frankly a little overawed to be in their presence! To put this into the proper perspective, I'd been a fan of Russ in particular all my life and to be offered this opportunity to meet him *and* the rest of Argent fairly blew my mind!

I asked for their signatures on my album covers, which they duly and obligingly did, then signed the setlist for me. Brilliant souvenir. While regarding my 'best of' Argent tape, Russ remarked that Rod looked like his sister on the cover. Having never knowingly met Rod Argent's sister, I can neither confirm nor deny this claim, but it certainly drew a large guffaw of laughter from the rest of the band. Somewhat surreally, Bob offered to take my photo alongside Rod and Russ, which was a fantastic ending to a very memorable evening indeed.



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