

RUSS BALLARD

*for the first
time in 40 years*

UK-TOUR 2016



Wednesday 20th January

LONDON

LEICESTER SQUARE THEATRE

Sunday 31st January

GIANTS OF ROCK FESTIVAL

Tuesday 8th March

MILTON KEYNES

THE STABLES

Friday 11th March

HRH AOR FESTIVAL

Saturday 12th March

DERBY

THE FLOWERPOT

Sunday 13th March

WOLVERHAMPTON

ROBIN 2

Friday 18th March

LONDON

NELLS JAZZ AND BLUES

>>TICKETS ON SALE NOW<<

As if anyone needs reminding, the tour kicks off in a few days. If you are going to any of the gigs, please feel free to write about it for the newsletter and/or send in some photos. I know at least one newsletter reader has been/is going to all except the festivals. And I know that some people are flying in from other countries just for a gig!

If you haven't already bought your ticket, here is the list of links again.

Tues 8th March - Milton Keynes, Stables http://www.stables.org/Whats_on/Event/Russ_Ballard

Fri 11th March - Gwynedd HRH AOR Festival <http://www.hrhaor.com/line-up/friday-line-up.html>

Sat 12th March - The Flowerpot, Derby http://www.rawpromo.co.uk/gig_guide.html

Sun 13th March - Robin 2, Bilston, Wolverhampton http://www.therobin.co.uk/whats_on/?m=201603

Fri 18th March - Nell's Jazz & Blues Club, W Kensington, London <http://www.seetickets.com/event/russ-ballard-and-his-band/nells-jazz-blues/948950>

To get you all in the mood, Dave Williams has sent a newspaper cutting of a review of Russ's solo gig at The Marquee in London. The gig was on Friday May 7th 1976, entrance fee 90p. Unfortunately, because of the problems with Outlook, I can't put it in the body of the email but you can find it in the attachment. Well worth a read!

Have a great time if you are going to a gig. I might see you somewhere.

Sue

Beer, Sweat & Cheers – Ballard comes home

Russ Ballard Marquee

Bathed in the Marquee's tropical atmosphere of beer and perspiration, a packed audience gave Russ Ballard a hero's welcome last Friday on this, his first official gig in Britain since leaving Argent, two years ago.

Complete with a guest list rivalling the Dead Sea Scrolls in length and the NME Encyclopaedia of Rock in content, it felt more like an unofficial welcome-back party rather than anything else, the general feeling of goodwill and unrestrained enthusiasm towards the band serving as ample proof of the respect Ballard has earned for himself over the years.

Two years of writing, producing and doing sessions for a variety of other artists, as well as recording two albums of his own, have kept Russ away from the stage, and his eagerness to recapture the spirit of live work made his performance all the more electric.

Still wearing the familiar dark glasses and toting the same old Stratocaster, he led his band of Bill Roberts (guitar), Tony Lester (bass), Wally Wilson

(keyboards) and Al Wicket (drums) through a devastating set of numbers from both his albums, interspersed with a few of the songs he wrote for others, Roger Daltrey, Three Dog Night and, of course, Argent.

Kicking off with "Danger Zone Part One", Ballard quickly found his feet and crashed into a powerful "Born On Halloween" from his new "Winning" album.

Throughout the rest of the evening his power and vitality prevailed, coaxing jagged, earthy chords from his guitar and whipping along the rest of the band at a steaming pace.

Helped by some strong harmonies, particularly from Roberts and Lester, Ballard's voice soared above the music as two years of pent-up energy discharged itself into the audience.

"A Song For Gail" provided a short breathing space between the rockers, Bill Roberts complimenting Ballard's sorrowful electric piano with some equally moving guitar, before taking off again with the unforgettable "Fly Away",

once more helped along by the strong harmony back-up.

It soon became apparent just how many great songs Ballard has in fact written, as he worked his way through numbers like "I Don't Believe in Miracles", "Liar", "Get Your Love", and "It's Only Money".

With every song he captured that magical ingredient of true "Rock 'n' Roll", each one so simply constructed, yet charged with a fire and vivacity which sent sparks of electricity cracking through the audience.

Slicing through the muggy atmosphere like a knife, the set climaxed with "She's A Hurricane" and "Weekend", leaving the audience calling for more even before the band had reached the stage door.

They obliged with "Danger Zone Part Two", Ballard's guitar once again springing into action, burning across the funky backdrop of Wally Wilson's clavinet, and nicely bringing the set to a close.

□ TREVOR GARDINER