

RUSS BALLARD



NEWSLETTER



Banner by Sven Kramer

This month we have the third and, sadly, final part of Bob Henrit's Tokyo journal. This covers the second gig and the journey home. I would like to thank Bob once again for letting us use it here. If you have enjoyed reading Bob's journals you can read many more stories in his autobiography, *Banging On*, available from Amazon.

Don't forget you can hear Russ on the radio on MAR, Merseyland Alternative Radio. <http://www.mar.me.uk/index2.html> Mr X (that's Sven!) has his show on Sunday mornings at 10am and Paul Jay's programme is on Sundays at 4pm with his famous "Russ slot" at 5pm. Sometimes, though, Paul sneaks in an extra at another time so you need to listen to the whole show.

Please join in and send me your stories, photos, questions and comments. Anything Russ related is welcome.

Sue

NEWS

Russ played with Lynne Jackaman of St Jude on Wed 25th June at the New Olympic Studios in Barnes, London, when they tried out some new songs. This was a private gig.



(Photo by UMU music)

Russ: *"Christian, Lisa Greene and myself wrote a song recently, it's called 'Parachute' [Lisa's title]. It's being released soon and there's a video being made"*

I don't have the artist's name at the moment. More updates when I have them.

Sada Vidoo

Many of you will remember that Russ spent much of 2012 working with Danish artist, Sada Vidoo. The music business works slowly but now, at last, Sada's album, "A Story With No End" and the single from it, "The Actress", have been released. At the end of June, the single was the highest new entry in the Danish chart. All the songs were co-written by Russ, Christian and Sada. Christian did all the engineering and production.

This is from Camilla Bjørvig [at](#) Sada's management:

"We have been so excited to finally be able to share Sada's first single 'The Actress' with her native country Denmark.

Up next is the rest of Europe!

The new single 'The Actress' from the long awaited album 'A Story with no End' was released on June 10th in Denmark:

<https://itunes.apple.com/dk/album/the-actress-single/id880194939?l=da>

If you haven't already please go have a look at the amazing video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpN8GTJzgvo>

And the remix by Electrick Village was realised last week as well - have a listen on:

<https://soundcloud.com/electrick-village/sada-vidoo-the-actress-electrick-village-remix/s-3KClt>

This has already sparked a lot of interest in the Press and the major national Danish newspaper Ekstra Bladet was the first to show the video:
<http://ekstrabladet.dk/musik/dkmusiknyt/article2299256.ece>

The single was the HitPick of the week at Chartbase:
<http://www.chartbase.dk/basemag/hitpick.php?tipid=24985>

Remember you can always follow Sada on:
<http://sadavidoo.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/SadaVidoo>
<http://instagram.com/SadaVidoo>

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Russ: *"Let's keep continuity and do a friendly, short one - 'PARACHUTE' - 'The mind should be more like a Parachute....it's better when it's open'"*

YOUR QUESTIONS

I love "Book of Love". Can Russ tell us what it is about?

Russ: *"For those Fans/Friends that heard 'Book of Love' and wondered what it was about - this is what I was thinking...."*

Since I was young I've been interested in why Humans can be so intelligent and so crazy.....When I started to write songs - one moment I was writing a Rock love song, then a ballad, but in between I was also writing songs that were trying to say something.....along with "Since you've Been Gone" and "So You Win Again", I was writing, "Chained". "Where Are We Going Wrong", "Cast The Spirit", "God Gave Rock and Roll To You" - "Voices" - and so many more that were trying to say something about the mess of human thought.....With the 'Book of Love' I developed that train of songwriting further. I put in every song things I'd learned over the years of living, searching and reading books on Spiritual and emotional growth."

HITS FOR OTHERS

From the soundtrack of the film "McVicar", in which Roger Daltrey starred as train robber, John McVicar, in 1980, "Free Me" by Roger Daltrey.

Written by Russ.

<http://youtu.be/l8kiPB-6Cks>

FROM BOB HENRIT

Konnichiwa Tokyo part 3:

Nothing disturbed our slumbers that night and we were all up relatively early so we didn't miss breakfast. I say all of us but Stuart didn't seem to 'do' getting up so he missed cornflakes, yoghurt, fruit, coffee and soft rolls. Or, in Russell's case, penne and coffee. As usual we sat for at least an hour talking about music until they threw us out of the restaurant whereupon we carried on talking about the same subject on the stairs outside. Among other things we were discussing the different records we'd made in America and the fact that next year I was going to the Chicago drum show to stand on my feet and not only talk my usual nonsense about 'sex and drugs and rock and roll' but also more succinctly about what the Americans call the British Invasion. I would also be shamelessly plugging my books. We discussed what if anything were the main differences between LA and UK musicians and decided that possibly the only real difference was caused by the weather. We Brits had anger in our playing because of rain, sleet, snow and difficulty in finding places to park - the West Coast guys didn't have any of these obstacles.

We weren't being picked up until 5.30 because we didn't need a long soundcheck so we watched CNN with dismay as they introduced us to even more atrocities in what we were now aware was our rather small planet. I watched the chilling story of the African terrorist who had kidnapped the 200 Nigerian schoolgirls and realised with a shock that he actually was educated and reading from a script. He was also in my estimation, judging by his gesturing, completely off his face on some sort of drugs.

To kill time we went downstairs for a cup of tea and we told a few funny stories like 'the Rolling Stones and the elephant', 'The Lone ranger', 'the Lion tamer and the excreta', the bear in the woods and Chris' absolutely true and hilarious car-wash story. Ask him next time you see him. We also watched young Japanese girls taking tea together with quilted cosies over

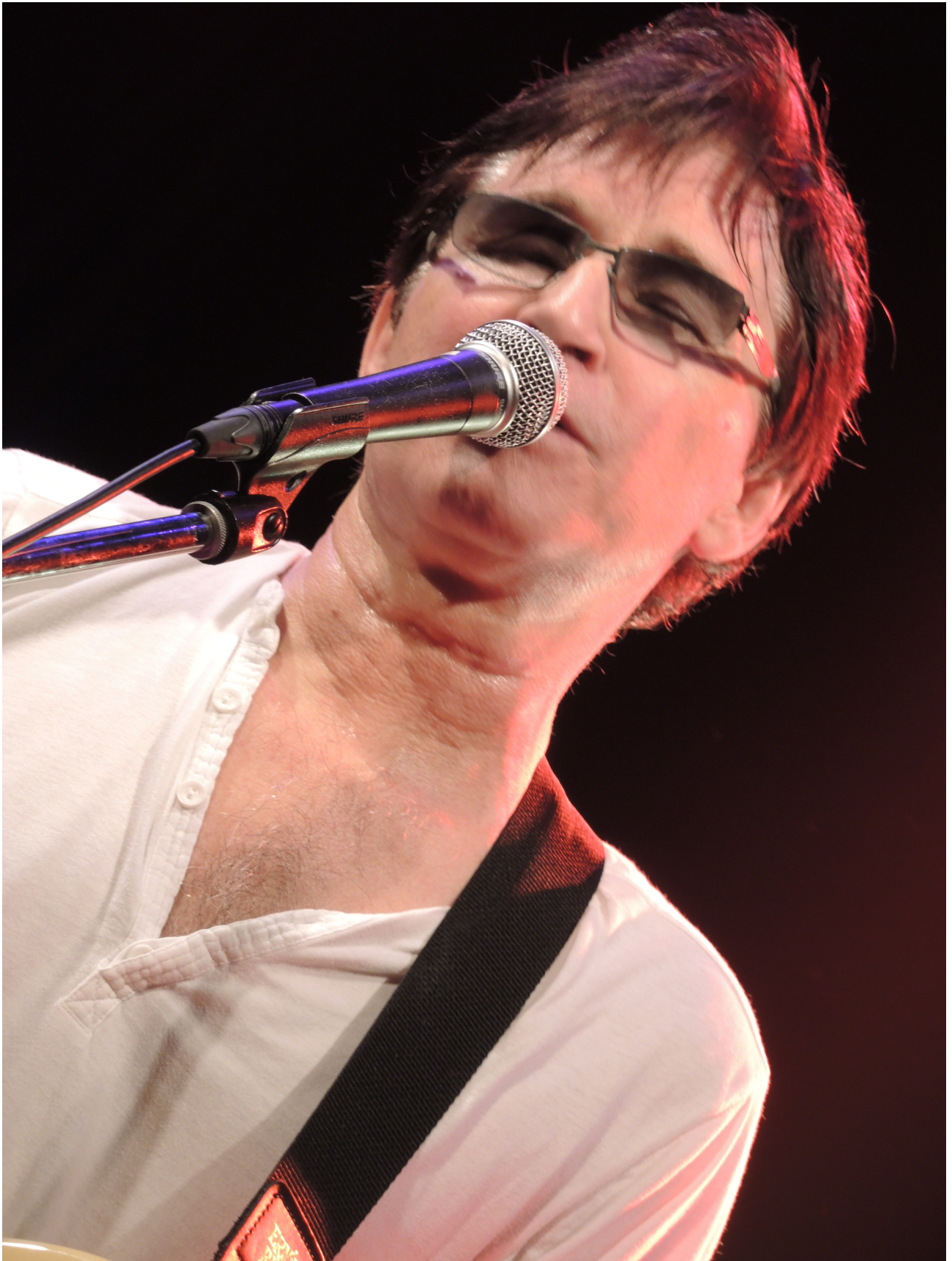
their teapots. The hotel appeared to be full of models and something else I spotted was girls doing 'selfies' using the video cameras on their I-phones to do their make-up, instead of mirrors.

I stepped out for a walk to see what the weather was like (surprisingly cold!) and bumped straight into a band playing outside the hotel in amongst the damned smokers and the wine drinkers. They were on a stage called I think the PePe stage – no sniggering at the back! Three front singers, guitar and keyboards all looking very much like a Japanese version of a Boy Band with ties, suits, trilbies but with a difference – they really could play and harmonise. The guitarist actually put his foot on his monitor when he played a solo and even when they weren't singing lead the redundant vocalists were mouthing the words. I thought the enthusiastic audience were a bunch of innocent bystanders until I noticed they were all clapping on the **offbeat** and they waved matching orange and white scarves in unison in the choruses of all the songs. They were all obviously rehearsed and even the girl selling CD's waved her scarf. At the end of the performance they did an exaggerated and elongated Liverpool bow – just like the Beatles. Whoever they were their harmonies were great and their show was very professional. BTW I'm sure I saw them at the airport as we left taking a plane like us! Their performance seemed to be part of 'Golden week Go! Go!' according to the advertising hoarding which filled the back of the low outdoor stage.

Just before we were picked up I was watching CNN and learned that it was exactly 50 years since Dr Roger Bannister broke the 4 minute mile at Iffley road, Oxford. I remembered it vividly which was something of a worry because I was just 'sweet' 20 and 4 days at the time and had been a professional musician for almost three years. (Where had all that time gone?)

We followed the day before's travel arrangements to The Doors and arrived just in time for an abbreviated soundcheck and afterwards we watched the crowd coming in from the balcony. I could be wrong but lots of them seemed to have been there the night before.

The gig kicked-off on time and today we kept closer to the script, starting as usual with 'Rene'. We really did rock out and nailed the tempos.



(In Tokyo)

I couldn't possibly say which songs went down best but again the audience were singing along with gusto to everything we did. There are two or three songs which they're expected to sing on their own and once RGB told them politely he'd really like them to, they sang along with alacrity. 'Hold your head up' was one of these of course, others were 'Voices', 'New York Groove' and of course the big sing-a-long: 'God gave rock and roll to you'. Of course I have songs that I really like to play and 'Hold your head up' is certainly one of these but I have to confess I do have a small problem with playing the arrangement correctly. There are three, (or maybe four) versions of the song which all vary very, very slightly. There's the Argent rendition, there's Russell's, John Verity's and then of course there's the record! So it's obvious I have to be acutely aware of whom I'm playing with and can't do it on automatic pilot.



(In Tokyo)

The gigs were over and everybody acquitted themselves admirably, especially Stewie who really was in at the very deep-end. That night the food we ate triumphantly after the show was serious. Seriously good and seriously Japanese. Sugureta!

We woke up at stupid o'clock on the day after that final gig because we had a reasonably early flight to catch – 11.15 to be precise. The sun was shining brighter than it had been 'thus far' on the trip to inadvertently (and unwillingly) quote Tony Blair. I noticed on CNN we were going home to temperatures of 60 which were less than in Tokyo but at least it 'were not raining'! We managed to grab a small breakfast and more importantly a coffee to wash down our various pills. The limo/van which turned up to take us away (Ha! Ha!) or at least as far as the airport was shiny, black and looked very like the ones the CIA use in Hollywood films. We said sayonara to Tetsuya and Izumi, hoped we'd see them again and asked them to say konnichiwa to Mark Griffiths when he arrived with The Rutbles.



(Photo by Vinyl Japan)

It's quite a long way to the airport but because the roads were more or less empty we cruised along at quite a rate. Every now and then we'd need to go through toll booths like none we'd ever seen before – they were automatic with a short wooden arm attached to each side of them which raised themselves as you drove. This was something which could be accomplished at speed but I'm guessing not much faster than we did. (Our guy who may well have been showing-off approached at 100 km per hour

and it didn't look like they were going to lift in time and we felt him brake just in case!

Checking in was very simple and not long after we were sitting in the Virgin Clubhouse sipping champagne and toasting Russell's son Christian's 39th birthday while the non-vegetarians amongst us munching our way through a sausage and bacon sandwich. It was a very short stroll down the ramp to the Airbus and soon we were getting ourselves ready for our 12 hour flight arriving in Heathrow at 3.40 pm bst.

It could have been the two cups of strong coffee I'd drunk in Virgin's clubhouse making me anxious, but I thought the take-off was more laboured than usual and hoped we weren't going to run out of runway. Our Airbus seemed to take longer than usual to unstick and haul itself up into the blue yonder but the pilot was obviously on top of his game and we survived.

We lumbered into the air and left Honshu Island and Tokyo far behind us and sat quietly as we climbed steadily to our cruising altitude of 39,000 feet.

(Not long into the flight they confiscated our champagne because they were expecting turbulence – but don't worry, they immediately brought it back to us in more stable glasses.)

RGB and I were facing each other as before and we discussed the problems of the day like Liverpool drawing a game they should have won the day before and the fact that Stevie Gerrard might never have the opportunity to win the Premiership title again – bummer! It was at this point that I realised I'd forgotten to put my anti-DVT socks on and they were in the hold along with Stewie's bass and Chris' sax. But fortunately I survived the trip and I'll try not to forget to wear them when I'm on my next long-haul flight which is to South Africa at the end of the year.

I was trying to bash this journal into my laptop so wasn't planning to watch any films. In the event it wasn't easy because of lack of elbow room in the sleeping pod. But I tried my best and discovered a useful fact - a fully charged HP Pavilion dv6 laptop's battery lasts for almost exactly six hours before giving up the ghost. The journey took 12 hours and for the rest of the time Russell and I reminisced non-stop. Possibly a new Ballard and Henrit record?

Before we went to Japan we had been interviewed separately by Caroline and David Stafford, a nice couple who have a new book in the works about Adam Faith. They'd also written a biography about Lionel Bart which Russell had with him and which I dipped into every now and again on the flight. We had once had quite a bit to do with Lionel through The Roulettes and Unit 4 + 2 since his company Apollo Music published some of the songs. On scanning the book I was surprised (even though probably I shouldn't have been) to see how much it paralleled 'Banging On!' It covered a lot of the same events, places and of course people.

What goes up must come down and almost exactly half a day after we left Tokyo we landed in the UK, joined a very long queue to put our new-fangled time-saving passports through a machine, retrieved our bags from carousel number one, walked through customs said goodbye to Stewie and almost straight into the people-mover and off towards a traffic jam on the M25 which made it absolutely impossible to get to my place without walking from the Pied Bull.

Russell went straight to Christian's birthday supper and in the fullness of time we found our way to our very own beds without the risk of being thrown out of them by any seismic activity. Old habits die hard and as soon as I'd had my first cup of coffee I phoned Russell to see what time he was coming down to breakfast! There are some plans afoot for further gigs so watch this space!

This may well be the most impertinent time to mention the only down side of the trip – Jet-Lag! To be honest we didn't give ourselves a chance because we were only there for five days (or six according to Chris' visa application) so before we had a chance to get over the time change and the sunshine our bodies craved when it was dark we turned around went home and did it all again. Our poor bodies didn't know which way was up – or down! I'm of the opinion that jet-lag strikes harder when you're over 21, which according to the d.o.b. section in our passports, unfortunately included all of us. I felt dizzy and generally spaced-out for days after and I know RGB did too. But to misquote several authors (and Devo) are we not men? If you prick us do we not bleed? If we travel 12,000 miles in five days across eight time lines and back again do we not get Jet Lag? The answer is emphatically yes we do, but it was really, really worth it.

Sayonara and arrigato Tokyo, watashi-tachi wa modotte kuru (as Arnie Schwarzenegger most certainly said in 'The Terminator' when he was dubbed into Japanese.) We'll be back!

To unsubscribe from these email newsletters, please reply to this email and ask me to remove your name.