



(Header, with new logo, by Sven Kramer)

What a couple of months! After the wonderfully successful 'Experience' at the beginning of April, Russ jetted off to Portugal for an even more amazing concert at Casino Estoril, not far from Lisbon, on 25th May. If you haven't seen the photos and videos on Russ's Facebook page, you should really have a look. If you are not on Facebook, you should still be able to access Russ's page here. <https://www.facebook.com/RussBallardMusicOfficial/?>

In attachments here we have some sample photos sent in by Jacqui Dove, Joaquim Galante and Roland Hertzog. Thank you all.

This newsletter is one of those for which you will need a coffee break. Lots to read but every word is worth it. We have accounts of the Estoril weekend from Brian Barry, who was lucky enough to see the show and, what you have been waiting for....Bob Henrit on the whole Estoril experience from the first rehearsal. As entertaining as ever! Thanks Bob and Brian for taking us there.... even though we weren't there. 😞

Take a breather after Estoril and go back to Ware in April. We were joined by reader, Marko Syrjala, who travelled from Finland to be there. Marko is a photographer and journalist, who works for several magazines both in Finland and internationally. During the afternoon at the Maltings, Marko did an interview with Russ. It's a long, original and interesting interview. Click on the link to see it, starting with an unusual photo of serious Russ!

Keep scrolling.....we have the Question of The Month and then Dave, once again, has come up with a little known cover of one of Russ's songs. Phew!

Best wishes

Sue

NEWS

Before you read about the exciting recent events, here is some future gig news. Russ will, again, be making a surprise guest appearance with Trevor Horn on a couple of dates of his summer UK tour.

- **27th July 2019 Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow**

Tickets for Glasgow here....

https://www.songkick.com/concerts/37565819-trevor-horn-at-main-auditorium-glasgow-royal-concert-hall?utm_source=34412&utm_medium=partner

- **28th July 2019 Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, London**

Tickets for the Royal Festival Hall here....

<https://www.songkick.com/concerts/37476599-trevor-horn-at-royal-festival-hall-southbank-centre>

Tickets are on sale now.

Remember Minds

**RUSS
BALLARD**

25 MAIO 2019

SALÃO PRETO E PRATA

 **CASINO
ESTORIL**

**BRIAN
SPENCE**

ARTIST

FROM RUSS

My good friend, Emanuel, asked some months ago if I'd play another concert in Portugal. In the last few years, Emanuel has become a very successful concert promoter, before that a gifted DJ and music fan. With various musicians, this will have been the third show I'd played - The other two were very uplifting to play and with this one, at The Casino In Estoril, it was much of the same...Beautiful venue, sound, lighting etc..and brilliant crowd. I've said many times before, the problem with performing one show is the fact that there has to be a lot of rehearsing to play one to two hours of music...not to mention, lyrics to remember, song arrangements, guitar solos, backing vocals to perfect. I guess, in all, it's a week to eight days of work, and when the hour and half concert is over, everyone concerned. - (the musicians and I) - look at each other and say..." I wish this was the first gig of a tour" The heavy rehearsals and the travelling, it's all Very worth it. As I have said before, playing live seems, to me , the only time we live in the moment, where for the musicians and the audience, we are not thinking about 'stuff', good or bad , but we're focusing on what's there, in front of us...For the musicians, it's the audience, and for the audience it's what's on the stage. Anyway, Emanuel, has never let me down yet, and The Estoril Casino show was no exception, and the icing on my cake, was my friends, most of all flew to be there...Ian Street and Karen, Sven and Yasmine, Brian and Jacqui, Roland Hertzog from Switzerland, Michael Bisping from Germany, Robert Mills from Spain and my dear local Portuguese friend, Vania Marrotti.

Thank you, also, Emanuel and your beautiful family for the Love you continue to show me...You are all very special.

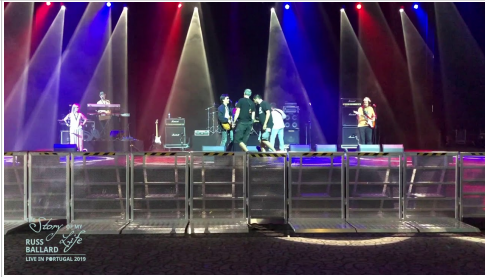
I just want to mention my great musician friends, Bob, Steve, Mike, Roly and Claire and say thanks for the work you all put in. At least it won't be wasted as we'll touring together within the next six months, on the, "IT'S GOOD TO BE HERE" Tour, to promote the "IT'S GOOD TO BE HERE" Album ...(Not That I'm one to advertise)...

*Oh, what a journey, (This life). Someone up there likes me...
Thanks, Sue, Thanks, Sven and Thanks, Carole. xxx*

And thanks everyone x    xxx

ESTORIL VIDEO

On the FB page you can see a compilation video, put together by Sven (yes, he was there), of the soundcheck. Very interesting. Sven put this video together for the newsletter. https://youtu.be/SV4scLb_-u4



[Russ Ballard Hey Bernadette - From Soundcheck to Stage Estoril 2019](https://youtu.be/SV4scLb_-u4)

Russ Ballard and his fabulous band performing Hey Bernadette, from Soundcheck to Stage. [youtu.be](https://youtu.be/SV4scLb_-u4)

ESTORIL

From Brian Barry

What a wonderful time Jacqui Dove and I have had for the past few weeks. We have been going to Liverpool for an international music festival in the Cavern Club for 13 years in a row now. Most days are all systems go from noon until 2am, with 130/140 bands performing. We try to see as many as we can.

This year we had the added bonus of the Malibooz from Los Angeles, featuring John Zambetti and Walter Egan appearing. As if this wasn't enough, drums and bass were being taken care of by the one and only Bob Henrit and Michael Steed. A win/win situation for us two right away.

The sets they did went down very well indeed, and Walter managed to fit in a solo gig when another act dropped out. We thought it was lovely to find a bit of time to chat with Bob and Michael in Liverpool, but that was nothing compared to what lay ahead in Estoril.

After ten days of hard partying and very long days, we arrived home at 7pm on Wednesday night. The alarm clock was set for 3am on Thursday to get up for the airport, and fly out to Lisbon. It could only have been adrenalin that kept us going.

It was going to be a long day...we landed in Lisbon at 9am, and a car had been arranged to take us to the hotel 20 kilometres away. We were supposed to book in after 2pm, but the wee lady on reception couldn't have been any nicer, and offered to get a room ready straight away for us. We decided to head out for a wander around the town instead. The Casino Estoril was pretty much only a couple of hundred yards from the hotel. This looked promising.

The weather was gloriously hot and sunny, which made me feel nostalgic for Glasgow because it's like that all the time there too, and the best part of the day was spent lying on the beach making the most of our few days there. We booked in, went for a meal then crashed out, unsurprisingly.

On Friday we visited the nearby town of Cascais, and made the most of the beach again. That Liverpool trip made it very easy to just relax it seems. It was back to the hotel later for a dip in the swimming pool, then out for a meal and a few Super Bocks, the local tipple. We headed back for a nightcap quite late on, when the peace and quiet was broken by the crash, bang wallop of a rock and roll band arriving to book it. Theirs and our jaws dropped when we saw each other...it was only Russ Ballard and his band!

You couldn't make this sort of stuff up! We had booked the nearest hotel to the venue as soon as the gig was announced, because we still had a few days holiday left after Liverpool. This was even before we had ordered tickets. Well it was all hugs, laughs and stories till the wee small hours, Super Bock may have been involved again, before eventually crashing out for the night.

When we crawled downstairs for breakfast, Russ, Bob and Michael the tour manager had already been up for ages. After breakfast, it wouldn't be too long before the soundcheck. The wee woman on reception told us she hoped to come to the gig too. I had other plans for the day as Celtic were playing in the Scottish Cup Final, with the prospect of winning an unprecedented "Treble Treble!" The omens were good, because May 25th was also the day Celtic won the European Cup...in Lisbon.

We found an Irish bar showing the game, and of course Celtic won. As if the day couldn't get any better, we still had the gig to look forward to.

Plans had been put in place to be in the company of the other "Russ Ballard Ultras" Sven and Yasmine, and Ian and Karen, to meet up for a pre-show meal. Once the grub was scoffed, we headed to the venue where we bumped into the Beat Boys, Bob and Mike, who were just heading in. It was pretty late already, by our standards at least.

Inside, the casino was huge. We picked up our tickets and made our way to the back of the hall, and up some stairs rather than the mosh pit. We actually had a great view from our vantage point, and settled down for the support act, Brian Spence, who came on almost immediately. I had Brian's "Reputation" album back in the day, so I knew he was a good song writer. What I didn't bargain on was the blistering performance from him. He went down a real storm, and it was obvious that people know lots of his songs. He got a wonderful ovation at the end, and I began to wonder if Russ would have trouble topping it.

How silly of me! By now it was actually MIDNIGHT. We're not used to this in the UK, especially when you need a bus or the Tube home. The band wandered on first, and as soon as Russ walked out, the place went ballistic. Opening the set with "Rene Didn't Do It", it was quickly followed by one of my own personal favourites "Rock and Roll Lover". It was a great set, obviously selected for the Portuguese audience in particular. We had seven songs from the second eponymous album, and six from "The Fire Still Burns".

A funny thing we Ultras noticed though was, the obvious show-stoppers in the UK, like the Argent songs, and even more puzzlingly, "Since You've Been Gone", weren't met with the unrestrained vocal participation we were used to in the UK. It may have been just a cultural thing. But to be fair, the crowd reaction to others, particularly "The Fire Still Burns" was off the radar. Russ's voice the whole night was fantastic. It really was a rocking set, but his vocals, for me, are still up there with Graham Bonnet, Glenn Hughes and more noted singers.

All in all, we had been treated to an almost two-hour show. I don't know where Russ gets the energy from. He had been up HOURS before us into the bargain!

Afterwards we were lucky enough to get backstage, courtesy of Russ, and join the soiree of family and friends and just enjoy the moment. We passed a little room where Bob sat alone, looking like he was just contemplating life and making the most of a couple of minutes peace and quiet. It was a lovely thing to see, so we didn't disturb him.

Russ, once again was very generous with his time for everyone there. The band knew it had been a great show, and rightly celebrated the gig. We said our goodbyes, knowing we'd see them back at the hotel later. And that's when the fun REALLY started.

Michael, the tour manager was first back with the, guess what? The Super Bock supplies, ha ha! It didn't take long for the rest of the crew to come back, and we

all sat up till nearly 4am, with Jacqui and I being the last men standing...again! We just sat there looking at each other wondering "How in the name of the wee man did THIS all happen?"

We DID manage to get up for breakfast early, as did most of the band. Russ was leaving earlier than the others, but we all had a lovely, quality time blether together for a couple of hours. Michael, the tour manager was a legend with some of his stories. Bob has such an understated humour about him with the way he tells stories. His upcoming books are certain to be gems.

After spending this much time with everyone these few days, it's obvious to see that Russ must have some sort of inbuilt, cognitive skill for picking good people to work with him. The respect, and genuine affection between Russ and Bob of course goes back 60 years. And it does so for a reason, the chemistry works. The other members of the band, Roly and Claire, Steedy and Steve are all part of a great team that work together brilliantly. It just all seemed to be so much fun for everyone, with no egos getting in the way at all.

What Russ showed he can do is handle ANY audience, and give his best in any given situation. From the intimacy of the smallest shows like the Maltings in Ware, to this weekend in an arena in one of the great capital cities in Europe, he can put on a wonderful show.

Another great thing about the whole Russ Ballard Experience, and the BEST in my opinion, has been the bringing together of diverse people who just came for the music, and left with new friends in their lives. I'd like to say a big THANK YOU, to everyone involved in making this show happen, and giving us a reason to all get together. Jacqui and I can't wait to see everyone again for another taste of the Russ Ballard Experience as soon as possible.



ESTORIL

From Bob Henrit

The triumphal return to Portugal aka 'Casino Ballard'

On thinking back I haven't played in Portugal as much as I would like to have. I can only remember one gig there with the Kinks; two, now three with RGB and

probably none with Argent. I'm afraid I can't corroborate any of those numbers now that the oracle, Jim Rodford has joined the choir invisible. As usual, Dr James Rodford would certainly have put me straight.

This year's show was at Estoril's Casino which was evidently not only the inspiration for the James Bond story 'Casino Royale' it had had a chequered career during the war as the meeting place of minor European Royals and of course not quite so innocuous spies of all nationalities.

But I'm a long way ahead of myself.

We started rehearsals for Portugal at the beginning just with RGB, myself and young Michael Steed esquire. This came about almost immediately after we three had all played at 2019's 'RGB Experience' show at The Southern Maltings in Ware. Not long after this we expanded our line-up by just over 33% by adding Roly Jones, who'd played at The Maltings and Claire Gordon, his lovely and highly entertaining wife to it. That meant Russell had vocal run-throughs around the piano with the new guys - for some inexplicable reason without the aid of someone whom Evie Taylor once called a f***ing noisy drummer.

We had a few run-throughs in Russell's studio and the final rehearsals were at Stevie Smith's studio in Ringwood - not too far from the seaside and the costa del Bournemouth. I crave your indulgence if you've heard this story but Steve's place had been the scene of the 'great Jaguar car incident' when we rehearsed there before we went to Japan in 2014. We were obviously rehearsing and drinking the odd cup of tea in the warm and dry while it 'slatted' down with rain outside. After quite a few hours we discovered the car's electrics had failed and its windows and roof had opened obligingly by themselves to let a great deal of the pouring rain in. Everything was soaked including the dashboard, seats, carpets and eventually the bottoms of our trousers once we sat down in it!

Not so this time. Steedy was driving us in his van which made it simple to take amplifiers in flight cases and the like - and as far as we know it didn't leak when it was parked outside the studio!

We set to work diligently and rehearsed this time with Steve on keyboards and Roly and Claire. We went through all the songs which Emmanuel had suggested

would go down best with the Portuguese audience - and he was right. More of this repertoire recommendation thing later.

We stayed in the hotel next to Steve's and of course went out for an Indian before we turned in early-ish that Sunday night. The next day we set-to with a will with all the songs before heading off home from Steve's once the traffic on the M3 had sorted itself out. We were going to regroup once more at Stansted in four days time and take The Great Silver Bird to Lisbon.

Cut to Friday 24th of May 2019.

The team was somewhat fragmented by the time we left Russell's for the airport. Claire and Roland aka 'The Honeymooners' for no other reason that I thought it had a nice ring to it, picked me up and ferried me the next 10 miles or so to Russell's gaff. (Just to show this stuff isn't just thrown together and actually researched painstakingly; I looked up the distance on AA routes from me to him and it's actually 10.1 miles.) We were meeting Steve there who was going to drive us on and park at Stansted airport so we could make a quick getaway when we came back on the Sunday evening . (This was in the secure knowledge that Mr Ballard would not be coming home with us - no matter what Ryanair thought when they discovered his empty seat next to Steedy when we flew back!)

So we set out along the highways and the byways of Hertfordshire and sat-nav inadvertently took us the wrong way and it's nobody's fault. For as long as I've had a sat-nav there are several miles of the A10 close to Russell's place where the bypass itself isn't marked and the satellite always seems to assume you're intentionally ploughing your way through a field - albeit at seventy miles an hour! Normally this doesn't matter because we locals know about this aberration but Steve was sent off initially in slightly the wrong direction which wound us around narrower and narrower lanes which I'm pretty sure Russell sometimes uses for his early morning runs. We discovered the odd farm truck in front of us positively filling the road and moving slowly. - this held us up. In the fullness of time, having meandered for a while, the circuitous route brought us around to within a couple of miles or so of Russell's where we waited anxiously at the slowest traffic lights in Essex, or were we still in Hertfordshire? As it happened no damage was done and we arrived at the airport with time to spare and met up with Steedy who had driven straight to Stansted. He was dressed in holiday maker mode: blue shorts, a green shirt and yellow baseball cap ready for the sunshine of Portugal. (I have in the back of my mind he was also wearing flip-

flops but that could be IFMS - intentional false memory syndrome.) Having already checked-in on line we headed for the gate while first stopping off at an airline lounge for a coffee, or whatever tickled our fancy which could be ingested quickly.

We took off into the blue sky (honestly) and headed south and then west for almost three hours until all of a sudden we were in sight of the Atlantic and were about to touchdown for an exceedingly bumpy landing. (I've been on 'planes in America when this has happened where the captain confesses over the intercom that it was the co-pilot responsible for the bad landing and normally he would make him go round and do it again properly!)

It didn't take long to clear customs and within no time at all we were hugging Emmanuel and his whole family. I don't know if it was the same deal this time but the first time we went with Russell the gig was 'crowdfunded' and the whole extended family financed that operation. We were all pleased that time to know it went well for the Goncalves family. That first time was in a bull ring which as a committed vegan Russell was somewhat taken aback by. However it gave him a platform to talk to the audience about the iniquities of the country's so called 'sport'.

As far as bums-on-seats were concerned the show at the Casino was already sold out so whoever had put up the money, the show was going to 'wash its face' which was wonderful news.

We were staying in the Amazonia Hotel in Estoril but we were heading for 'summat to eight' first. In a brilliant restaurant in Alges which was just on the edge of Estoril. We really were team handed and Brian Spence once of Bilbo Baggins, who was supporting us, came too.

We all fancied a glass of ice cold Portuguese dry white wine which somehow never seems to taste quite so good at home, It wasn't until we'd quaffed some of that that we turned our minds to what to put into our stomachs. I went for something i'd never heard of before: a Tuna Burger. It was minced up with various delectable things in a bun and with the addition of a 'slack handful' of chips was well worth waiting for.

Once we were well and truly sated we bundled ourselves back into the people carrier and Anabela (our adventurous trainee F1 driver) headed for the Amazonia hotel. We all had suites with kitchenettes but I certainly didn't avail myself of any of those facilities and tumbled into bed.

And so to sleep, perchance to dream as The Prince of Denmark once said.

As usual Russell was up first eating vegan things and talking to Michael Bisping who was there to lend a highly-experienced hand. As usual I was the next to emerge to look out over the pool and over the terracotta rooftops to the Atlantic and help myself to Breakfast. Eventually we were joined by the the others including the Honeymooners who, BTW have been married for a year but were an item for many years before they finally got up the courage to tie the knot.

We hung around in the sun drinking more coffee before heading for that night's place of work to set up and fine tweak instruments before eventually getting on with the sound check.

Russell felt quite rightly that since he needed to be as close as possible to the audience, the drums were too far back from him to really feel them. I agreed and towards the end of the sound check it was decided they needed to be moved several feet forwards which cured the problem.

We kept at it until it was as good as it was going to get and we headed back to Amazonia to get ready for supper. We were going back to the same restaurant in Alges as the night before and I was looking forward to the tuna burger I'd enjoyed then. However, even though it was still delicious the second time, it wasn't minced and didn't taste quite the same as it had the night before. This may well have been because the night before we were all starving - or 'Hank Marvin' as modern rhyming slang has it.

Now I haven't revealed much about the lovely Claire Gordon, who is a breath of fresh air, talented and ridiculously funny. When she gets together with Steedy, my whole body aches with laughter. She was planning to scrub-up to get ready for the gig and it was only then I thought to myself I'd never really been in a band with a girl before! Mostly my preparations to get out on the stage and metaphorically 'sell sex' have always involved putting on a clean shirt with an

equally clean black or white T-shirt under it and that's that. However, "don't you know that it's different for girls?" A girl on stage has to really make an effort and Claire certainly did. But there's more.

The building the gig was in was impressive although we didn't have a chance to visit the Casino and get rid of any euros we obviously didn't need anymore. I think we were all far too long in the tooth to get involved in that sort of malarkey. I thought I recognised the place which may well have been because I'd been there with The Kinks, or simply channeled the 'spoof' James Bond film which that time only starred David Niven as 007.

The place was packed and the audience were extremely enthusiastic from the word go.

I thought I'd share something with you. While we were learning the songs, in his good-natured exasperation Steedy inadvertently taught me something which I'd never thought of before - even though it seems I've been playing drums for at least a couple of years now! Notwithstanding I'd played on the 'Barnet Dogs' album only 40 years ago (!) I was having problems with the accents in the middle of "It's too late". Even though I'd written it down I was making a pigs ear out of it. Steedy gently suggested I turn the notes into words! This made the whole 12 bar passage look like this.

BATMAN 345678, 12345678, SAUSAGE 2345678, (other two syllable words beginning with a B are available and a great deal more evocative) then SAUSAGE 2345678 again, then BUM,23 followed by another BAT-MAN,, APOOH and CRASH then 12345678 which brought me and the others back into the song.

There were some memorable moments in the show like the lights going out while I was building a shed at the end of "Once a rebel" when Russell was poised in mid-air ready for me to shut the door when he landed. It was reminiscent of a gig in NYC in 1970 (or so) at a time when he would end a song by waving his guitar around his head and throwing it high into the air. while I built yet another shed behind him. We'd all close the door once he caught it. Unfortunately he launched it into the air as the lights went out. Nobody knew where the 'Holy' Fender was other than it was airborne. Unfortunately what goes up must come down and Russell soon discovered where this would be when it landed on his

nose. It may another instance of false memory syndrome, but I think Variety, the US's showbiz newspaper reported the incident with the alliterative headline: "Ballard Bends Beak"!

Recounting this story puts me in mind of another when we were playing at The Agora in Cleveland when Russell fell foul of a step in the stage which went from stage left to stage right. After the very long Ravel's Bolero intro tape, which gave us the necessary 15 minutes to get ready, Russell walked forward towards the front of the stage while playing the arpeggios at the beginning of the 'Coming of Kohoutek'. The spotlight was on him making it difficult to see as he walked purposefully forward, like Bonnie Raitt. He couldn't see the floor of the stage as he crossed the step, which wasn't too deep but it didn't need to be. He stumbled and could have saved himself had it not been at the time before 'strap locks' were invented. His guitar slipped off one or both of the strap buttons and crashed to the floor - making a fair representation of the noise of the 'Hard day's night' intro chord. We started the show again albeit without a quarter of an hour of Ravel's Bolero.

Actually it wasn't just RGB who had on stage embarrassment so in an attempt at parity I'll own up and put myself in the frame too! We were in Bakersfield, California playing with Steppenwolf "Get your motor running" and for some reason we had unwisely (?) decided to leave "Hold your head up" for the encore - presumably to ensure we got one. So we finished the show and it took some time for the punters to realise they'd been short-changed and hadn't heard the song they'd come for. This brief pause made the drum tech think the show was over and contemplate removing the drums from the riser. It's germane to know it was pitch black on the stage. When we burst back onto the stage (unseen by me or anybody else) he had removed one exceedingly important piece of drum equipment. I'll give you a clue, it wasn't the gong or the orchestral bass drum. As with Russell's setbacks it was the lack of light on the stage which precipitated it. So I did the usual flurry around the toms and turned round to hit the gong before sitting down to start the rhythm: bum, titty- bum, titty-bum, tiity-bum crack. Unfortunately the important piece of equipment which had already been 'struck' by the drum tech was the stool. I ended up on the floor and something like 10,000 unkind people roared with laughter.

So, compared with that, as far as I'm concerned, Spinal Tap didn't touch the surface and if you have the stomach for it I have a great many more of these -

several concerning RGB and myself from our Adam Faith days concerning flying celebrity owned and valuable Martin guitars and extra-high risers! Oh and walking through glass doors before health and safety warned you of their existence by putting silhouettes of birds on them!

The crowd in the Casino were absolutely ecstatic about the show and as ever, the evidence can be found on Youtube. The choice of Ballard songs which had been pre-selected by Emanuel was on the money too.

We started with “Rene didn’t do it” which I remembered well considering it came from a not far off 40 year old album which we recorded in the second Livingstone Studios in the converted church depicted on the album cover and conveniently, for most of us, situated next to The Duke of Edinburgh pub in Wood Green. When we recorded I would have been just about halfway to the age I am now. It always sounds great and gets us off to an excellent start. We then moved on to “Rock and Roll lover” then “Playing with fire” which is great to play and goes down well. It is, I’m pretty sure the only four on the floor, Texas blues shuffle Russell has ever written. The next was “Here in the night, followed by “Dream On”, “Hey Bernadette” and “Voices”. Then “Since you been gone”, “God gave rock ‘n’ roll to you” and something which gave us the chance to get our collective breath back: ““Day to Day”. It went down a storm and the crowd threw bodies. “Time” came next with its ticking clock followed as ever by “Your time is gonna come”. We breezed into “Once a Rebel” and “A Woman like you” before “Hold your Head up” and “It’s too late”.

Eventually we got to “The Fire still Burns” which was Claire’s turn to come into her own and besides singing, press the button on the Ipad for the bells at the beginning of the song, I looked across and smiled encouragingly as she pressed the button on the ipad with what I thought was just a little trepidation.

“Two Silhouettes” was the penultimate song which came next then we had arrived at “Can’t hear you no more” which was the last song of Portugal 2019.

Believe it or not I was hot after the show but I wasn’t glowing (only ladies do that) or sweating (horses do that) but I was perspiring in a manly way. I sat

quietly in the spare dressing room getting my breath back and swigging a beer. I put my sticks away and changed my T-shirt and it was over.



Adeus Casino do Estoril.

On the Sunday Russell was heading off down-country after breakfast with his family to the Algarve while the rest of us were getting ready to go home. But, we had time to kill and Michael Bisping rightly suggested we should use it wisely and head for Cascais. Brian Barry, who while he may not be our biggest fan or the furthest travelled is certainly the most ubiquitous having been with Steedy and me at the cavern. Brian suggested it wasn't far and we could walk there in no time at all. Fortunately in the end Michael had euros because Germany are still in The EU and bought us tickets to let the train take the strain. We were ultimately pleased by this turn of events because even at 10.30 am it was baking hot; Claire enthusiastically sprayed our bits the sun could get through to with suncream. The trains alongside the coast were quaint or should it be

workmanlike, something like the trams in Lisbon which took us up to the castle the first time we were there. Two stations later we arrived in Cascais.

There was something unnerving about the pavements in Cascais. They can best be described as Trompe l'oeil which makes the tiles which are laid in the uniform shape of a snake look bumpy and give the impression of peaks and troughs as they undulate up and down and from side to side.

To rewind a little, on the night before the gig we'd let ourselves go a bit and had a couple of refreshing team-building beers and a couple of equally refreshing even more team-building ice cold white wines, (That's my story and I'm sticking to it.)

After all, we needed to wash our delicious food down with something!

I never went to the restaurant's loo on the first night but I had to when we ate there not long before the gig. Big surprise, the seat rotated (horizontally, not vertically which would put one in some difficulty). And to make sure you were aware of it and didn't inadvertently get anything caught, there was a large black dot set into the seat which went round and round when you pressed flush to warn you what was happening. Now I obviously don't get out enough because everybody I talked to about it when I got home knew of the existence of this piece of sanitary equipment. It transpires there's a pad permanently touching the seat and it's evidently the best way to clean it.

I had a few problems at Casino Ballard which I won't bore you with here but if you send me an, SASE.....

Michael Bisping has been around Russell for a long time and he came to Estoril to do several important jobs, including tour manager, stage manager and gofer. Chapeau Michael.

There has been talk of a tour for 2020 which would be fabulous and if we can fit in a gig at Ware too that would be even more fabulous.

See you there?

RB EXPERIENCE

From Marko Syrjala



Click on the link for Marko's article.

<https://www.metal-rules.com/2019/05/19/russ-ballard-legendary-musician-and-songwriter-discusses-his-career-the-past-present-and-future/>

QUESTIONS

I saw my 54 yrs life as pictures and pieces of music. I was wondering how Russ creativity comes ? And where does all this greatness come from?

Russ: *"I know what you mean - 'Pictures and pieces of music' . I associate much of my life and memories, with music. I often remember situations - (and the year) - by the music that was being played at that time. I was very lucky to have been surrounded by music... My dad was a band leader - (a drummer and pianist) as was my brother. My mum was a dancer and danced in professional reviews all over Britain, before she was a teenager...So, music was always there."*

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.10



In Dreams *by* Björn Skifs

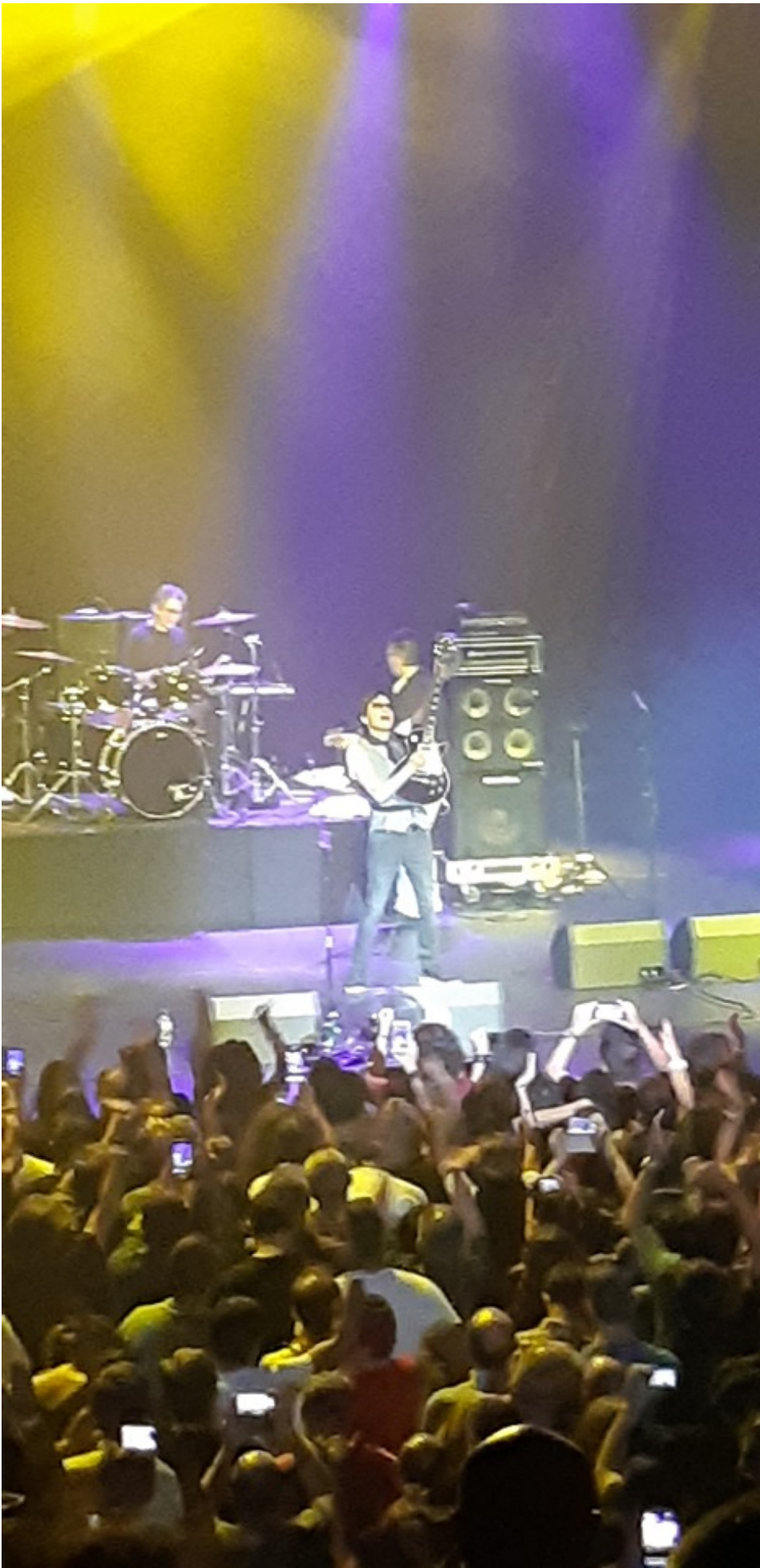
Björn Skifs is a Swedish singer, [songwriter](#), actor, and [screenwriter](#). Born in April 1947, he formed his first band **Slam Creepers** in 1962. When they split in 1969, **Skifs** went on to form a new band. As lead singer of **Blue Swede**, he had a No.1 Billboard hit in 1974 with a cover of Mark James's **Hooked on a Feeling**. This was the first time that any Swedish act had reached such heights with a pop song.

Skifs left the band in 1976 to pursue a solo career. He recorded a duet, **Med varann**, with **Anni-Frid Lyngstad**, aka Abba's **Frida**, a tune you may recognise <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwdaCXMZtN4>

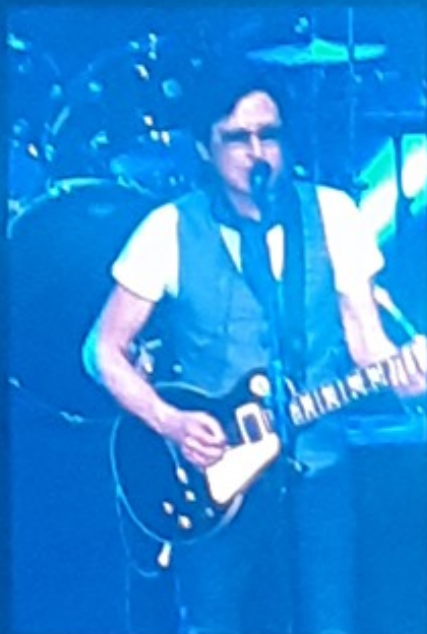


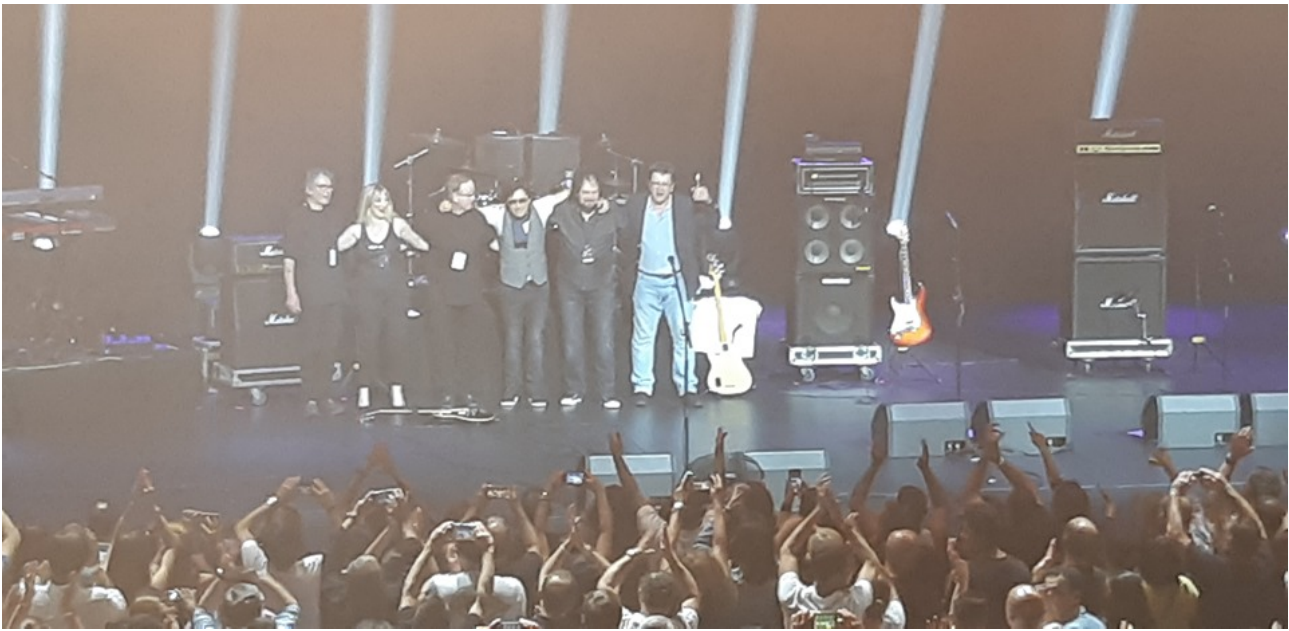
Bjorn represented Sweden twice in the Eurovision Song Contest, first in 1978 and then again in 1981. Later, in 2002, Bjorn scored a massive hit with the song **Håll Mitt Hjärta** (Hold My Heart) which remained in the Swedish pop charts for a total of 142 weeks. But our interest in Bjorn lies earlier in 1984, when he recorded and released **In Dreams**, a song written by **Russ Ballard**, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_p2n0fMRHM which featured on his album **If... then**.

Based in Stockholm, Bjorn continues to record and last year he released a compilation of his life's work in a box set covering the years 1967 – 2017.

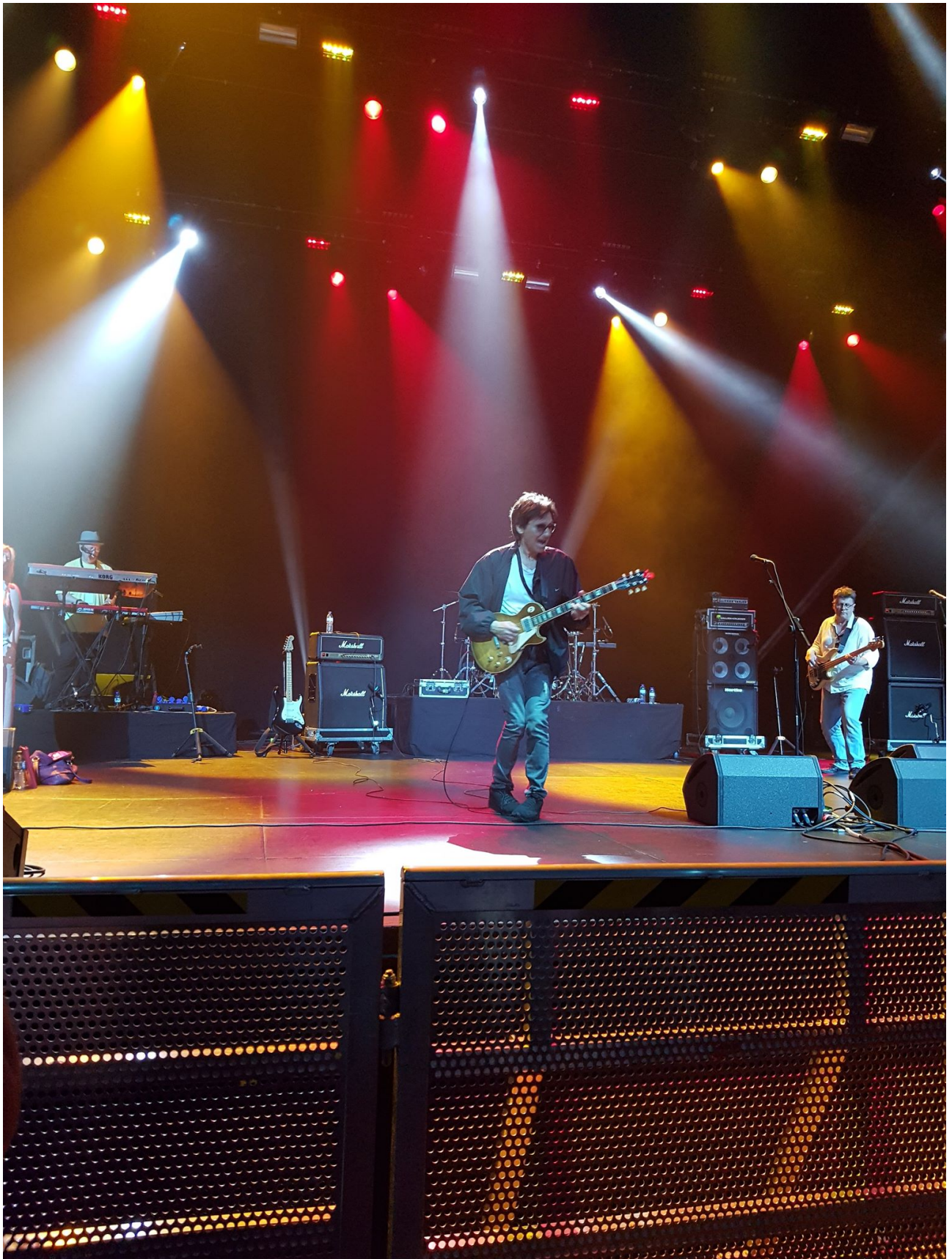


RUSS BALLARD

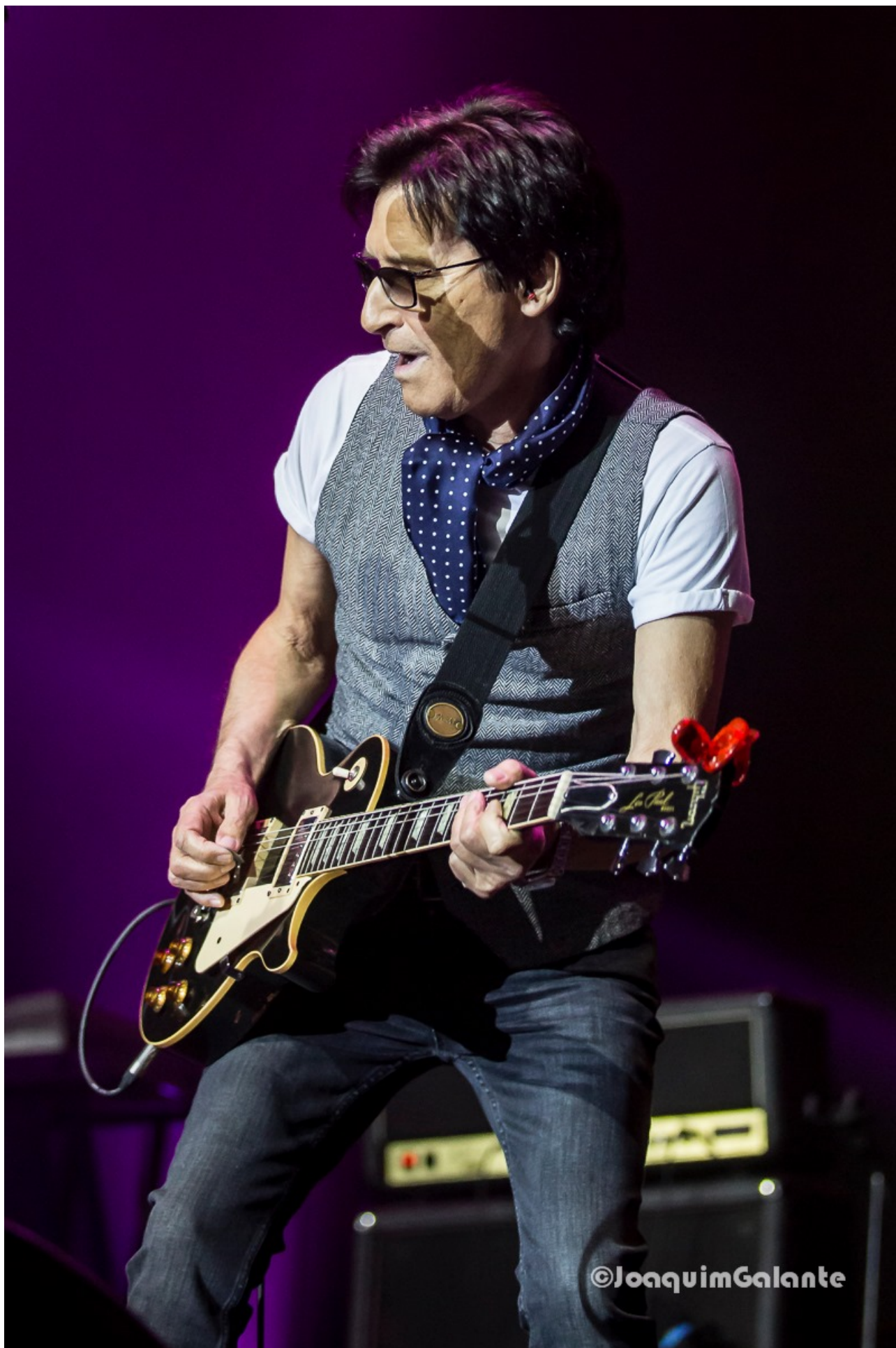












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