



(Header by Sven Kramer)

Once again, welcome to our new readers.

Russ's shows with Trevor Horn were very successful. Were any of you there? I have only been able to find three videos from the shows I have included one from each show below. The Glasgow one is not even a complete song but just a couple of minutes or so. However, it gives us a taster and it is good to see Russ in action.

Russ is a great story teller with, as you can imagine, lots to tell about his musical life. I think I have persuaded him to share some of his stories with us via the newsletter. He has written one this month, anyway, which I know you will enjoy, and I am hoping he will do more in the coming months. (Russ? 😊)

Dave reviews Book of Love. This album strikes a chord with a lot of people. It is very personal to Russ but the depth of the songs gives the opportunity for everyone to interpret it in their own way. If you don't know it, you might want to have a listen after reading Dave's article.

Dave's cover this month is from Dutch artist Bert Heerink. I remember when this was released as a single and it was pretty successful in his home country. One of Russ's more 'rocky' songs and one that I think most of you won't have heard.
Sue

THIS MONTH FROM RUSS

Russ: *It's good to have a gig or two on the horizon, I know I have to pick up the guitar and practice songs for the show. The past weeks I've been a guest of The Trevor Horn Band. The first show was at The Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow, then on the 28th July, at The Royal Festival Hall in London. Trevor's album is a homage to the 80's, with new versions of 'Everybody Wants To Rule The World', 'Ashes to Ashes', along with 'Kiss From a Rose'. Steve Hogarth, singer from Marillion was also a guest and performed those songs beautifully. I played ' 'Since You Been Gone' & ' God Gave RnR To You' - it was great fun, as Ever. If you get the chance go and see his show, great songs, beautifully performed.*
Happy Holidays x

<https://youtu.be/jtdWaFvCv30>



[TREAVOR HORN \(God Gave Rock 'n' Roll to You \) - RUSS BALLAD - 2019 - God Gave Rock 'n' Roll to You](https://youtu.be/jtdWaFvCv30)

God Gave Rock 'n' Roll to You God Gave Rock 'n' Roll to You TREAVOR HORN - GLASGOW - 2019 God Gave Rock 'n' Roll to You God Gave Rock 'n' Roll to You TREAVOR H...
[youtu.be](https://youtu.be/jtdWaFvCv30)

<https://youtu.be/dHq59d4XD3o>



[Since You've Been Gone](https://youtu.be/dHq59d4XD3o)

This video is about Since You've Been Gone
[youtu.be](https://youtu.be/dHq59d4XD3o)

RUSS: MY STORY

First Guitar

If anyone out there is interested in 'My First Guitar' - (And how I acquired it).....There's a good book for guitar enthusiasts, written by top session bass player, Mo Foster. He persuaded many guitar players to tell the story of their first guitar. It's a good read and has most of the well known players of the past fifty years, with photographs. My story is in there, along with a pic. of my first group, Norman Eddy and The Imperials, which

included sixteen year old Bob Henrit. Cliff Richard is in the picture pretending to give us tips about showbiz...(The photo was taken by The Hertfordshire Mercury)....

My Story....

*"I'd been going to piano lessons for five years, from the ages of eight to thirteen and I really didn't enjoy the process. Oh!, I liked playing tunes but not being taught or having to practice everyday. I wanted a guitar, and I plagued my Dad over and over, "I want a guitar". That was my mantra for months..."You're not having one, stick to the piano". (That was my Dad). I apologise now for sounding so disgustingly spoilt, however, throughout the weeks I worked on him. I knew he could be worn down by continuous nagging...The overpowering need to have a guitar became too much. "This is the night" I thought. It was a Saturday night and I waited for him to come in from work. Actually, he was in a rotten mood - I think he was tired. As soon as he walked in to the house I gave him my opening gambit..."Dad I want a guitar". - "You're not having a guitar, stick to the piano", he said. "I want one" - I pleaded, "Please" - "No" - "Pleeeesse" - "No" - "Pleeeasse". "This is not working", I thought...Now I will use a new plan.... I laid on the floor and kicked the fireplace - "I-Want-A-Guitar". This was either going to lead to the back of Dad's hand...Or...I don't know where... this was new territory. Then, as I waited for, I don't know what, Dad shouted, "Get your coat on" - I wasn't ready for this, My Father Had Surrendered and we were in his Lorry driving to Cheshunt to Moore's music shop. "He wants a guitar...Give him a guitar" - There were probably eight guitars. I chose the most expensive, 10guineas (10pounds fifty pence) I also got a guitar tutor, Burt Weedon's Play in a Day... We jumped in to the lorry ..."Thanks Dad". I tried to sound humble....Dad just blurted back "Another bloody five minute wonder" 🎵🎵 😊🎸 I think he and Mum both enjoyed being part of the journey.
Love, Russ xxx*

MAGAZINE ARTICLES

Russ is featuring in a couple of current magazines that are available now. He did a long interview for **Rock Candy** magazine, which is available in WH Smith in the

UK and, no doubt, other reputable magazine shops. The writer of the eight page article, Jon Hotten, spent a day with Russ at his home and the result is a lovely sympathetic article by someone who is obviously a fan.



If you are in Germany, **Classic Rock Magazine Germany** also has an article currently, written by Martin Buchenberger. I don't read German but Sven tells me that the headline is "What Is Russ Ballard Doing Today?"

Was macht eigentlich Russ Ballard?

Dressed To Thrill

ZZ TOP

Was auf Zack sein wie ZZ Top, deren Mucke-Gitarre wird immer bestechend laut Wirklichkeit, ein wenig Texanes Attitüde sind zu hören dann, Ach ja, die chrip-erlich auch nicht fehlen! Und wer so etwas bei der aktuellen Filtration: ZZ Top sind aus Texas und trotzdem durch.



Erst kürzlich spielten Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow in München die Russ-Ballard-Komposition 'Since You've Been Gone', die 1979 mit Graham Bonnet am Mikroskop ein großer Hit für die Band war. Auch Ex-Kiss-Mitglied Ace Frehley hat aktuell bei seinen Shows mit 'New York Groove' einen Ballard-Titel im Programm. Der heute 73-jährige Brit schrieb die Nummer 1973 für die Glamrocker Hello. Schon bevor Ballard mit Songs für Künstler wie Roger Daltrey, Hit Chocolate und Agnetha Fältskog aktiv ist, mischte er eifrig im Rockgeschäft mit. 1963 zuerst bei The Roulettes, dann, ab 1970, mit Argent. Dank Ballard an Keyboard, Gitarre und Schreibfeder konnte die Truppe um Namensgeber Rod Argent unter anderem mit U2 zu Beginn der 70er einen großen Erfolg landen. Nach vier Jahren zog es Ballard weiter – auf den Pfad seiner Solo-Karriere. Als Produzent für Künstler wie Leo Sayer und America machte er sich ebenso einen Namen wie als Komponist und Performer. In den 80ern startete er mit Alben wie BARNET DOGS und dem heutigen Rockklassiker 'On The Rebound', sowie einem selbstbenannten Album mit Krachern wie 'I Can't Hear You No More', 'Two Silhouettes' und 'Voices' richtig durch. Nicht zu vergessen das Album und der gleichnamige Hit THE FIRE STILL BURNS von 1985. Bis zu THE SEER (1994) und BOOK OF LOVE (2006) sollte zwar noch etwas Zeit vergehen, untätig war Ballard aber nie. Er komponierte für britische Acts wie Little Angels, Magnum und Thunder, sowie für internationale Größen wie Carlos Santana. Der britische Beitrag zum 2001er Eurovision Song Contest 'No Dream Impossible' trägt ebenfalls das RB-Gütesiegel. Auch Live-Aktivitäten gab und gibt es immer wieder. Sola, gerne mal akustisch, oder, wie 2010, im Rahmen ausgewählter Gigs mit Argent in Originalbesetzung. Aktuell gibt es Kompositionen für Künstler wie Cassidy Janson (das Debüt der bekannten West-End-Schauspielerin ist erst kürzlich erschienen), sowie vereinzelt Konzerte, darunter jüngst eine Club-Show unter dem Motto 'RB Experience' in der englischen Heimat, aber auch einen Casinospektakel mit dem Rockkollegen Brian Auger & The Trinity in Portugal. Im Programm zum Beispiel das Argent-Stück 'God Gave Rock And Roll To You', das Kiss auf ihrer aktuellsten Abschiedstour in ihrer Version immer ab Outro vom Band laufen lassen. Zusätzlich trat Ballard im Juli in Glasgow und London als Special Guest des ehemaligen Buggles- und Yes-Musikers Trevor Horn auf. Für März und April 2020 sind deutsche Termine geplant. Als Instrumentalisten wird Ballard unter anderem den früheren Kinks-Schlagzeuger Bob Henke, mit dem er schon bei den Roulettes und Argent zusammenarbeitete, an Bord haben. Die Konzertreise soll laut Aussage des deutschen Promoters 'It's good to be here' heißen. Unter diesem Titel wird auch ein neues Album erscheinen.

Martin Buchenberger



Mit ihrem neuen ALBUM ZONIA geben S... Proggerocker Isi aufsehenerregende Köpfe Van-Der-Graaf Generat Hammill bekannt. Ke Johansson freut sich über eines Kindheitstraumes.

Um mit einer Floskel zu st... zusammen, was zusammen... einen Seite Isildurs Bane, d... Schweden gegründete Pi... Keyboarder/Ideengeber M... der anderen Seite Peter H... der britischen Rocklegende Generator und für seine... Exkurse bekannt. Auf... kommt es zu einer ungewö... tion, das Ergebnis kann ab... klingen.

Matt Johansson ist VDG... ten 70ern und somit au... Hammill's Gesangsstil. K... freut er sich über diesen... Bane nach der Zusammen...

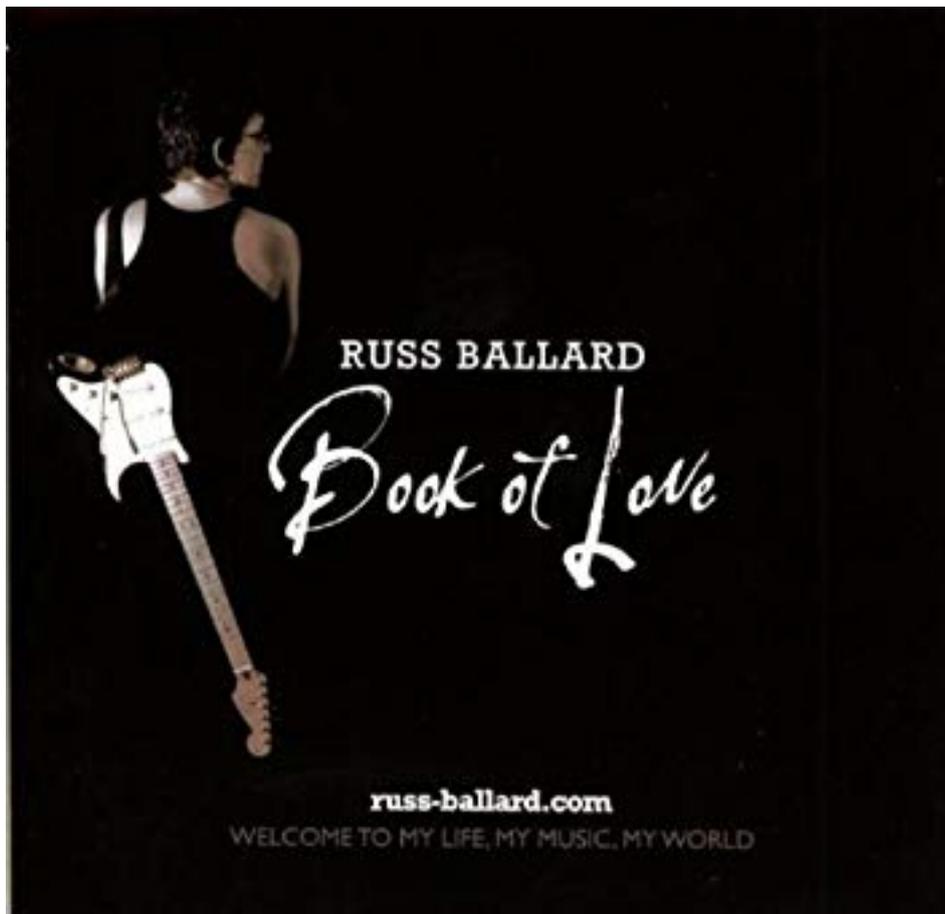
You can use this link to find the magazine details online. Russ is not mentioned on the cover but he is in that edition with ZZ top on the front. <https://classicrock.net/aktuelle-ausgabe-classic-rock-magazin-zz-top/?fbclid=IwAR0Ao-jzHwxV9OpF3-Jeoi3S51vmufhvEmfeUINEF7MLn8t-C8aCpfBlvCU>

RUSS'S MUSIC HISTORY

By Dave Williams

My Life, My Music, My World. Welcome to the Book of Love

Book of Love is Russ Ballard's 9th solo album release. Quite a departure from his previous work, what we have here is a concept album, which takes the listener on a journey through life questioning our behaviour as humans and searching for answers. What is real love?



Russ Ballard – Book of Love (2006) Silversonic PMG SC 06-02-03-1

Whilst Russ has written and recorded more than his fair share of songs based on relationships, he's never been afraid to explore deeper subjects. On the 2nd **Argent** album **Ring of Hands** he provided the song **Where are we going wrong?** in which he wrote *'there must be a road that we could walk down and everyone*

walking is one, there must come a time when people will see the ends of all that they've done'. On the **Nexus** album in his song **Gonna Meet my Maker** he wants to ask God why *'some are left alone and why the innocent die'*. It seems that Russ has long harboured a desire to write a whole album based on a journey to explore the true meaning of love. Why not? **Marvin Gaye** had a similar desire to write an album that explored drug abuse, poverty, war and ecological issues. **What's Going On** is now regarded as one of the greatest albums ever recorded. Likewise, **Stevie Wonder** wrote and recorded **Innervisions**. But concept albums bring challenges, one being to ensure that the music doesn't suffer for the sake of the lyrics.

Book of Love must have taken a lot of planning. Rather like chapters in a book, each song would be required to take the listener through the various points on the journey, the songs needing to be carefully chosen and placed into appropriate positions as if piecing together a jigsaw puzzle. Russ has stated in the past that he tends to write more songs than he uses on an album, allowing him to select the best. I gather he wrote about 30 songs for **Book of Love** of which 16 were used. Musicians involved include **Chris Childs** and **Harry James** both from **Thunder**, **Chris Winter** (string arrangements) and **Steve Rodford** (Drum programming). **Mod Rogan** appears as the Wise Man (naturally!) and the voice of **Ashley Halliday** represents Russ as a child.

The first song on the album is called **It's My Life (Stand in My Shoes)** and appropriately features the line *"Let me introduce myself. I'm the weaver of a dream"* and invites the listener to step inside his shoes and spend some time with him. Naturally, as an opening song it needs to make an impact, so not surprisingly it features a background of power chords and a vocal chant *'It's My Life'* on the chorus. An introduction needs to be short and to the point, and after 2 minutes 39 seconds the song leads straight into **Crazy World**, which has a Bon Jovi influence. It was during this song that I started to pick up on some autobiographical references. Lines such as *'and the child what did he do to deserve the fate he got from you'* and, in relation to money, *'just keep it in your head you won't take it with you when you're dead'* are lyrics lifted from **Helpless** and **It's Only Money** respectively.

In the Dark is a traditional Russ Ballard style anthem that helps keep the album in tune with what we are used to from Russ. The journey picks up again with the hypnotic **When You Sleep**. The tempo is slowed right down as a voice whispers *'sleep, sleep, go to sleep, tell me what you see'*. Where do we go when we are asleep and what do we see in our dreams? **Love Works in Strange Ways**

continues to question. How does love work? What makes us choose one person above another? How does a friend become a lover? The conclusion is that love works, but in strange ways.

One of the songs I find most touching is **Like Father, Like Son**. We grow up longing to be loved and hugged by our parents, so in later life why does a son find it so hard to return these feelings towards his father? Are we conditioned to suppress such emotions? How often are we told '*big boys don't cry*'? Inevitably the day will come when it's too late to say the things we longed to say. We can't turn the clock back and we live to regret not taking the opportunity while it was there.

Not every song is quite so philosophical, **Is Anybody Out There** being a case in point. Philosophical or not, songs such as this and the following track **I'm Not Made for This World** can be enjoyed as traditional Russ Ballard album tracks; strong melodies and catchy choruses, but still forming part of the 'journey'.

No matter where we come from, the colour of our skin, the language we speak, the religion we might follow etc, as humans we are essentially the same. **Just Like Me** is based on a conversation with a Chinese girl. As the conversation between the two progresses, they realise they are not so different from each other at all. We share the same emotions; happiness, love, hurt, anger, fear. So why do we end up fighting and hating each other? It seems logical that the road to peace lies in communicating with one other. Listening to and trying to understand each other and learning to compromise. I imagine we all felt a sigh of relief when Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un agreed to meet recently. One step at a time, and maybe only small steps on a long road, but nevertheless, progress rather than pointing missiles at each other and threatening to fire.

The subject of religion raises its head in **Onto the Next** with the observation that '*the priest, the monk and the rabbi*', those people who know the way, '*won't even listen to what the other has to say*'. It's an interesting observation. God didn't create the various religions, people did. Maybe God does speak the same truth to people all around the world. The question is, when God speaks, what do people hear? Again, the importance of listening.

Next is a song about love, but as the title says **This is not a Love Song**. It expands on one of the themes mentioned earlier in **Crazy World**, when a strong loving relationship is formed between two people only to later fall apart as '*faith and trust turn to dust*' with the resulting hurt and sorrow as love can turn to hate.

The Road that has no Turning and **In My Darkest Hour** describe the emotional aftermath of such a breakdown.

The title track **Book of Love** follows. To me it seems to summarise everything that has happened so far. Finding love only to discover it wasn't really love at all. Fortunately, there is a happy ending. **Into the Light** sees the writer escaping from '*the pain of darkness*' when he suddenly realises that there is an open door that leads into the light. The light that he's been searching for arrives in the final song **Wonderful World**, an expression of release and freedom. '*When the pain has stopped and the crying's over, when today is done then tomorrow's gonna come. It's still a wonderful world*'.

So, that is my take on the journey. Others will probably take away something different. I guess a lot of the lyrics are open to interpretation. Much has changed since its release in 2006. We had the 2008 financial crisis, the most serious since the Great Depression of the 1930s. We've had catastrophic weather events with global warming considered to be the likely cause. Global migration continues, brought about by conflict, violence, persecution, poverty and food shortages. Here in Europe we have the destabilisation resulting from the ongoing Brexit situation. Meanwhile some of our World leaders hardly inspire confidence for the future. Undoubtedly, we live in troubled times. Should we worry? After all, it's not the first time. As the **Book of Love** suggests, there's light at the end of the tunnel. We just need to find it.

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. There's lots of little gems out there and I thought it might be nice to share some of these discoveries with readers. This month's offering comes from the Netherlands.

No.12



Panic Attack by Bert Heerink

Born in Utrecht on January 26th, 1953, **Bert Heerink** was the lead vocalist for Dutch rockers **Vandenberg**, named after their guitarist **Adriaan "Adje" van den Berg**. Parting company with the group around 1985, Heerink went on to join the short-lived **Picture** for the recording of their **Marathon** album. From then on, he got involved in a number of interesting and diverse projects including the theatre tours **Queen in Concert** with the **Royal Dutch Airforce** and **Symphonic Echoes of Pink Floyd** with the **North Netherlands Orchestra**. He also spent time as a

member of Dutch rockers **Kayak**, and has also worked more recently with former **Focus** guitarist **Jan Akkerman**.

In 2009 Bert was offered the opportunity to record a solo album, **Better Yet**, which was released in September of that year. The opening track, **Panic Attack**, was written by our very own **Russ Ballard**. The song was released as a single reaching No.9 in his home country and staying in the Top 100 for an amazing 15 weeks. Here is a link to the song for your enjoyment. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45Fm42YHoi8>



[Bert Heerink - Panic Attack](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45Fm42YHoi8)

the official videoclip of the brand new single "Panic Attack" performed by Bert Heerink, the voice of Vandenberg.

[www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45Fm42YHoi8)

Its definitely got that RGB stamp on it.

Interestingly I discovered an earlier Bert Heerink release called **Julie July**, which reached the Netherlands Top 10 in 1979. Most people will probably recognise the tune as **Hot Chocolate's** 1973 widely covered hit **Brother Louie**. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFcy4_MvPOw