



(Header by Sven)

At the beginning of every month I open an email, write the subject line...Russ Ballard News - xxxxx 2020...., look at the empty page and wonder what on Earth I am going to put in it. Then I get an email from Dave with his latest brilliant article and off I go. Then, as if by magic, lots of other things pop up. We have quite a selection this month. What I would like is some more input from you, dear readers. You all have some Russ history. We would like to read your memories, read about you to get to know you better, have your questions for Russ. This is our **90th monthly newsletter** so many of our more established readers have already contributed but that doesn't mean we don't want to hear from you again. To our newer readers, come and join in.

This month we have videos (weird ads on some of these!), interviews, podcasts from Francie Conway, Kevin White, Robin Mayhew, Sina Drums and, yes, Bob Henrit. And the official video of Two Silhouettes, which has been hiding away somewhere. Dave's article is an interview with Sticky. Did you have a go at the Lockdown Quiz? I would bet that you didn't get the American sitcom answer. See Dave's Covers for the full story.

Stay cool, safe and well.
Sue

THIS MONTH FROM RUSS

Hi everyone. I hope you are all bearing up and digging in. Thank you everybody who has supported the newsletter.... There is certainly a lot in this month's edition. At this time of Covid 19, because I have been locked down, I have, literally been stuck around my home for five months like a lot of people..... Actually, that's not so bad as there are acres and acres of footpaths and bridle paths where I run every day. Like for many people, the past 25 weeks have been very repetitive. Because I get a buzz from being in the studio writing and making music, I do it every day. I'm conscious that my life right now could sound too boring for a newsletter and I mentioned this fact to Sue and Carole. Sue suggested I write about what I do in the studio. I've told both Sue and Carole when I write, I usually write for myself or I put something of myself in the song..... The two hits I wrote for others were New York Groove for Hello and later, Ace Frehley, and You Can Do Magic for America..... Actually, New York Groove was a lot about my going to New York over and over again. This month Sue suggested I talk about the latest video that has surfaced, unearthed by Jelle. That's the Two Silhouettes clip. Actually, the Two Silhouettes video was a surprise. Amazingly, I haven't seen it for thirty years..... probably over thirty years. When I saw it the day came flooding back. We filmed the song at Brixton Academy. It was the first time I had met the musicians and, strangely enough, I only knew one and that was the drummer, Mike Richardson. He was a good friend and still is. Actually, two years later he played on No More The Fool, the single and album I wrote for Elkie Brooks. The bass player, I know his name was Ted and I know he was a Chelsea fan. I do remember the keyboard player was American, a good looking guy. He's probably still American, actually. I remember he told me his Mum was an actress. She, apparently, was in a film with Marlon Brando and had, allegedly, had a fling with him. I didn't play two parts in the video. The director found an actor to do the stage scenes where I look from the wings. I don't know who came up with the Twilight Zone idea but I think it works. I remember I did do the sound effects on my little analogue Korg synth. I did dido dido dido dido music! The filming in the car was done later that same day in Kings Cross. The crew spent some time attaching cameras to the car, then hoisting the car to a trailer, which drove around the streets of Kings Cross. There was a thing that made us

all chuckle while the crew was setting up. Some ladies of the night gathered. They were some distance away.....they were laughing and shouting at us.....there were some funny comments.... "wanna good time boys"was my favourite....and "free sex"!!! It was good fun and, as I've said many times.... it's better than work.

Well, I hope the rest of your August is problem free and I wish you all well. Lots of love and I'll be with you next month. Take care. xxx

TWO SILHOUETTES OFFICIAL VIDEO

Our friend and long time Russ fan, Jelle Jansen, has been making video clip compilations and trading them all over the world for many years. Recently, he received a parcel of about 50 video promo clip compilation DVDs from various sources. On one of those this video showed up. It is the full length official 1984 video of Two Silhouettes. I have never seen this before and I reckon it will be new to, probably, all of you. There is a story, not just the stage performance. We have Russ the actor here!

<https://youtu.be/rmwD44uxEsw>



[RUSS BALLARD : Two Silhouettes \(full length official video 1984\)](https://youtu.be/rmwD44uxEsw)

RUSS BALLARD : Two Silhouettes (official video 1984) 0;00 Intro - Russ Ballard enters The Twilight Zone 1;53 Two Silhouettes <https://www.facebook.com/RussBallard>...
[youtu.be](https://youtu.be/rmwD44uxEsw)

At the time of the making of this video, Russ did an interview in which he talks about it and other things. You can find it on Russ's Facebook page in the post on 14th August.

FRANCIE CONWAY TRACK

In March this year, Dave mentioned in his cover story, a track by Irish singer, Francie Conway, called Do You Wanna Make Love. The song was written by Russ and features Francie on vocals; Russ on vocals, piano and guitar; John Verity on vocals and guitar; Jim Rodford on bass; and our very

own Bob Henrit on drums. Quite a line-up! At that time, the track wasn't available on YouTube. Francie sent me the track but Outlook won't let me put downloads into emails. However, it is now available on YouTube as part of The Chris White Experience Vol 4.




Here is the whole album and Francie's song is the first track.
<https://youtu.be/qlzCeqRoRzQ>

INTERVIEW WITH KEVIN WHITE

Kevin White, a music journalist, has been doing a series of lockdown interviews ("as a distraction from the news etc") for his Facebook music blog, "Where The Music Does The Talking". Russ agreed to an interview last month. Look at Kevin's post for 25th July for an entertaining read.

<https://www.facebook.com/774849045934108/posts/3112288728856783/>

	<p>Where the music does the talking.</p> <p>Lockdown Interview #12 Russ Ballard Russ Ballard was in The Roulettes, Unit Four Plus Two in the 60s and Rock band, Argent in the 70s before going solo and forging a successful career as a solo...</p> <p>www.facebook.com</p>
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BOB HENRIT PODCAST

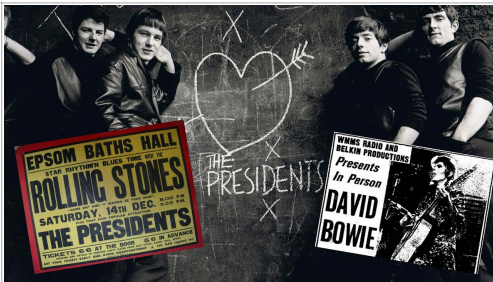
New on 9th August, Bob has done this podcast for website, The Strange Brew, which " highlights particular themes in British rock music from the mid 1960s to the present day." We all love Bob and here he is his usual entertaining self, with stories about his amazing life in music. Lots of good music in here too from the various bands he has been involved with. Obviously, Russ gets a mention or two. This podcast is 1:45 long so I put it on my phone and carried it around in my pocket while I got on with other things. (Making lemonade!).

<https://thestrangebrew.co.uk/bob-henrit>

ROBIN MAYHEW REVISITED

Last month, Dave's article was an interview with Robin Mayhew, the sound engineer for Russ's 1976 tour of the US. Since then, Robin has done this interview for "You Can't Unhear This". He doesn't feature Russ here but, if you would like to put a face to the man, here he talks about a part of his story.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXrI7XOyz08>



[From The Stones to David Bowie: Robin Mayhew's Life in Music | YCUT Interviews - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXrI7XOyz08)

In this very first You Can't Unhear This interview, I spoke with Robin Mayhew, a lifelong musician whose early days in a forgotten band called The Presidents led him to cross paths with The ...

[www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXrI7XOyz08)

SINA DRUMS

Long before musicians spent their time in lockdown collaborating by video links and other technological wizardry, a group of very talented and very young musicians from all over the world were already doing this, producing some amazing covers. In the January 2019 edition of the newsletter (you can find it in the archive of newsletters in the "News" section of Russ's website) Dave wrote an article about some of them including a young German girl, who is now in her early 20s, Sina Doering, known on social media as Sina Drums. The reason for the article was that a couple of these young people, one from Russia and the other from Romania, had covered Since You Been Gone. Now, on her own YouTube channel, Sina has done a drum cover of Rainbow's version of I Surrender. Have a look here...

<https://youtu.be/YTNQ5ph4H2M>

RUSS'S MUSIC HISTORY

By Dave Williams

MEET THE BAND – STICKY WICKET

We've recently run features on two members of the very first **Russ Ballard Band**, formed a year after leaving **Argent**. **Tony Lester** and **Bill Roberts**, bass and lead guitarists respectively, gave us an insight into their careers, and last month we presented an interview with **Robin Mayhew**, the sound engineer who worked at the back of the venue controlling the band's stage sound on European and American tour dates in 1976. This month we go from the back of the hall to the back of the stage as we talk to the band's drummer, **Alan "Sticky" Wickett**. This feature will be covered in two parts, the second part of which will be carried in the September newsletter.

DW) I guess my first question concerns the correct spelling of your surname. One t or two? I've seen it spelt both ways. Then of course, you also acquired the clever nickname "Sticky", but I always remember you from your earlier days as simply "Al".

***AW)** My real name is Alan Wickett. 'Sticky' was an occasional nickname until I joined the **Steve Gibbons** band in 1981 whereby 'Sticky' stuck! When I wrote 'Sticky Wickett' it didn't look right so I dropped one 't' and have been known as 'Sticky Wicket' ever since or 'Sticks' to all my friends and music mates. If you prefer it Dave, you can call me Al. (DW: Hmm, I feel a Paul Simon tune coming on!)*

DW) You have quite a comprehensive website, which goes into great detail about your life in music. Can you tell us a bit about your beginnings?

***AW)** My dad had an eclectic taste in music, and he bought lots of records, including Lonnie Donegan, Elvis Presley, Little Richard, Chris Barber even some classical. Aged six years old, I used to strum along on a little tin guitar given to me by my dad. I never tuned it, as I was more interested in the rhythms.*



When my cousin bought a beautiful white drum kit, I immediately knew that was what I wanted, but dad wouldn't entertain the idea. Then my cousin met a girl, lost interest, and lent the kit to me. Initially I was only allowed the snare and the hi hat. I wasn't allowed the bass drum because of the noise, but I made myself a bass drum pedal using Meccano which I put up against the cupboard in the bedroom. It made a fantastic bass drum, creating as much if not more noise than a real one!

DW) How old were you at this point? How long was it before you started playing with friends?

AW) I was 11 when I eventually got my cousin's full drum kit. I was fortunate that my dad was happy to take me around to all the 'free and easy' sessions, nowadays referred to as 'open mics', and the Trad Jazz sessions in the pubs and clubs around Birmingham. This resulted in some paid work, mostly in the local Working Men's Clubs. I really wanted to join a band, but the 'good' local musicians felt I was too young. In the end I formed my own band, naming them as **The Cynic Set**. We got gigs in local Church Halls and Youth Clubs and before long those musicians who rejected me were asking to join my band!



DW) This was 1967 meaning you were around 16 years old, an important time for any teenager with exams looming. Did gigging affect your schoolwork? How did you juggle the two?

AW) I stayed on at school to take my A-Level exams, but I still managed to play occasional gigs and I also managed to take a few lessons. After my exams I was working with a good, popular local band and also took a job to help me buy the best American drum kit I could afford. Then one day I saw a local newspaper

advert from a band looking for a drummer with work lined up in Germany, which sounded great! My parents could see how enthusiastic I was, and they were supportive. I answered the advert, attended the audition, got the job and off I went as a 'professional drummer'. This was in 1971 and I was 20 years old.

DW) I know in his book *Banging On*, Bob Henrit recalls his experiences of playing in Germany and it involved playing several sets daily through the afternoon and evening. Hard work but great for developing technique and style. Was that your experience?

AW) I think my experience was a little different to Bob's. I joined a cabaret band called *The Joy Train* (pictured below), playing for the American service personnel at US Bases. We had a female singer and two female dancers, therefore we tended to play shorter spots, although we sometimes had to play several spots in a day. It was a great learning experience and working alongside American musicians taught me a lot about their styles and the grooves they played!



DW) Birmingham was quite a hot bed for top musicians and bands. Did you rub shoulders or get to perform with anyone of note in the late 60s / early 70s?

AW) Yes it was, and I was working with the aforementioned popular local band from 1969 & 70 which was called Perfumed Garden, later to become **Clayton Peacock (pictured below with Alan in the middle), a heavier sounding blues**

outfit. One of our regular venues was 'The Witton Arms' right next to Villa Park, Aston Villa's football ground and '**Ozzie**' **Osbourne** used to pop in occasionally to see us as he lived close by! I had already got to know the 'Sabbath' guys at one of their regular gigs, Henry's Blueshouse, back in the day when they were a blues band called **Earth**. I was particularly friendly with their drummer **Bill Ward**, and we used to visit each other quite regularly to talk music and drums. I still have a Ludwig snare drum that he gave me!



DW) You shared your time between playing in rock bands and local trad jazz bands. Your interest in the latter was inspired by seeing Buddy Rich at Birmingham Town Hall, an interest that would lead to a move to London.

*AW) In the Summer of 1972 I moved to London and yes. that was the best move for me especially after a personal recommendation enabled me to walk straight into a job with a band called **Armada**, a progressive Jazz/rock style outfit which was perfect for me at the time. **Sammy Rimmington** who ran the band was a well-respected New Orleans Jazz musician, having worked in the States with some of their finest musicians in that style. I rented a room at Sammy's family home and I learned a lot from him about Jazz and being a professional musician. I started to play jazz gigs with him too and doors started to open for me in all spheres of drumming work at that time!*



DW) You certainly look the part in the photograph. Presumably one of those doors that opened led to the invitation to join the band that Russ Ballard was putting together.

AW) After a couple of years working with Armada and playing Jazz in London with Sammy, plus other gigs, I was looking for something new and I saw an

advertisement in the *Melody Maker* magazine from a Melody Maker Poll winning band called **Curly**.



Curly

Managers: Ken Holroyd
Mauldins Cottage, Venus Hill, Bovingdon, Herts.
Telephone: Hemel Hempstead (0442) 833215
Bookings: 01 842 9115

*I liked the sound of them. They were funky, Americana style with two sax players. They liked my sound too and I was invited to join the band. They were a Hertfordshire band and it just so happened that **Russ** was looking for a band to back him at the **CBS Convention** in Eastbourne just after making his first solo album. He came to one of our rehearsals and as a result we were booked for the event. The Convention was held in September 1974 and we did our slot as did others such as **Sailor** and the **Three Degrees** with **Leonard Cohen** headlining. It was a fantastic event and the first time I ever played with Russ, but I'm absolutely delighted to say it would not be the last!*

Well that's all for this issue. Join us next month for Part Two of the interview, when Alan will talk about his live work and studio sessions with Russ, along with the musical path which he has taken since then, which amazingly includes working with some of those legends that his dad used to listen to. Alan also discusses a more recent collaboration with our songwriting Wizard from Ware

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

Another dip into the vaults to see what might be suitable for feature this month. As I've said many times, **Russ** has had his songs covered by people from all over the world. This month's offering features a song that is popular for the dance routine that accompanied it, and was co-written and sung by a beautiful young lady from Vilnius in Lithuania.

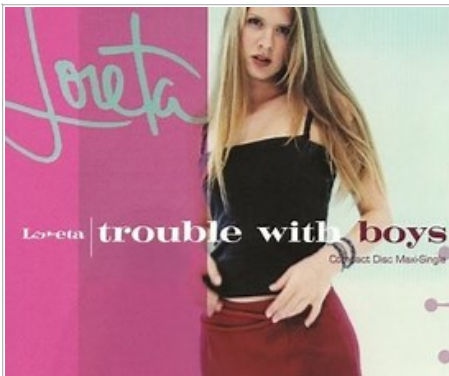
No.24



Trouble with Boys by Loreta

Anyone worth their salt when it comes to music knowledge would surely recognise the name **Russ Ballard** as a songwriter, even if they struggled to name one of his songs. On the other hand, they might say “Oh, I know him. He’s the guy that had two of his songs featured in **Miami Vice**”. What they might not have said is that he also had one of his songs featured in an episode of **Friends**, the American sitcom that ran for 10 seasons and is probably the most popular TV shows of all time. I’m not actually sure too many followers of Russ were aware of this either, to which I hold my hand up as I only found out myself a few weeks ago.

The song featured in the episode **The One with the Routine**, which aired on 16th December 1999. For those who have access to the box set check out **Season 6 Episode 10**. The song was written by **Russ Ballard** with the Lithuanian born singer contributing lyrics and plays out to a dance routine performed by the characters **Monica (Courteney Cox)** and **Ross (David Schwimmer)**. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8k7z5RSkm5c>



[Loreta - Trouble With Boys](#) [\(Junior's Radio Edit\)](#)

DISCLAIMER: The audio track displayed on this video does not belong to me. The credits go to Reprise Records. For entertainment purposes only, no copyright intended. "Trouble With Boys" is a song performed by lithuanian singer Loreta. The song was released around late 1999 and early 2000, mostly known for beign featured on a "Friends ...

www.youtube.com

Loreta Frankonyte first achieved success at the age of 5 when she appeared in a television talent contest. By the age of 7 she was appearing in front of crowds of 20,000 people at venues such as the Olympic Stadium in Moscow. This success continued into her teenage years.

In order to broaden her horizons, Loreta moved to London at the age of 15 years old, where she continued her education. By the time she had completed school she was already working with top UK songwriters including **Bruce Wooley** and **Russ Ballard**. Loreta's soprano vocals can be heard on **Grace Jones'** song **Storm**, which featured on **The Avengers** movie soundtrack.

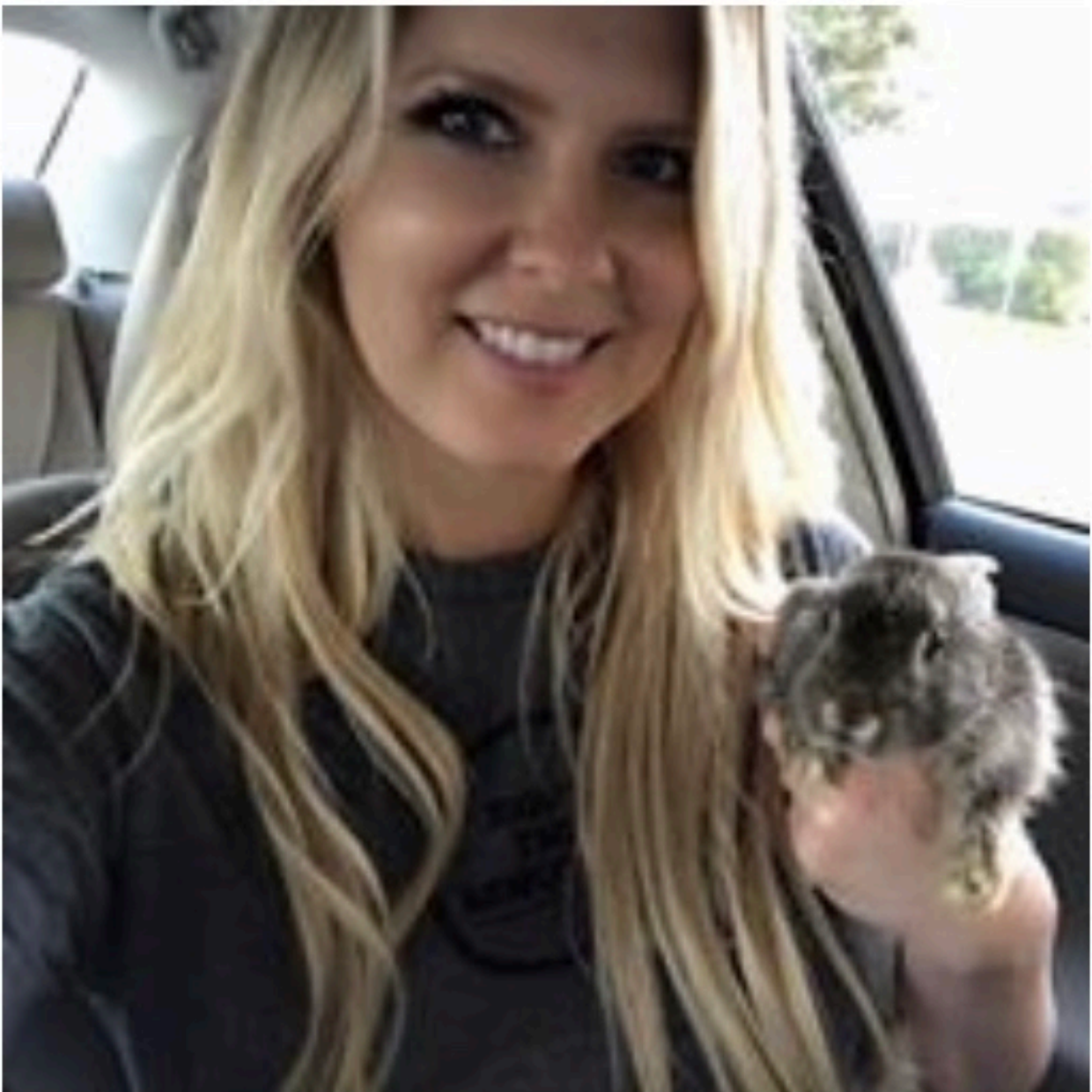
The popularity of the dance performed by **Ross** and **Monica** is clearly demonstrated by the number of You Tube film clips made by amateurs taking great happiness and enjoyment in attempting to recreate the much-loved routine, particularly at wedding receptions around the world.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeTgG_-14BI

This shouldn't detract from the song itself, which is high class. All the more wonder why it never reached a much bigger audience.

Needless to say, there are cover versions. Here's one I found by Audio Dolls <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBeDW2Bb6ss>

Disillusioned with the path her career was taking, **Loreta** moved to Miami and studied photography and painting, but she never turned her back on music and on re-discovering her creative streak she moved again, this time to Los Angeles. In addition to her interests in the arts, **Loreta** is a big supporter of animal welfare.



Well, we couldn't finish this article without providing a link to the actual TV clip featuring the dance, so here it is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISCrrkSg8Zw>



[Friends: The Routine \(Clip\) | TBS](#)

#TBS #Friends #JenniferAniston SUBSCRIBE:

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<http://bit.ly/1qBbkMW> About Friends: Pull up a

couch and relax at Central Perk, where six

Friends gather to talk about life and love.

Friends tells the story of siblings Ross (David

Schwimmer) and Monica (Courteney Cox)

Geller, and their friends, Chandler Bing ...

www.youtube.com