

(Header by Sven)

June 2021

Welcome to our new readers. We hope to hear from you...please join in.

Those of you on the Facebook page and Voices group will have seen some of the things we have this month but there are many of our readers not on Facebook so I am including them for you. If you have seen them before, why not have another look or listen.

Dave's article is a tribute to one of our readers and a long-time Russ fan. If you have been with us long enough, you might have read a couple of things she wrote for us previously.

It's hot in the UK!! For a pleasant change. Stay cool!

Best wishes

Sue

THIS MONTH FROM RUSS

This past month Christian and I have been working with an artist called John Guelas - He plays guitar well and has a great voice. Christian has written a couple of songs with him since January. While I was working in my studio some weeks ago, they asked if I'd write a chorus to an idea they

had. We finished the idea and it sounds great. Now, I hear a record company have offered him a deal, which is good. Anyway, it seems he has hundreds of thousands of fans in the east....so, watch this space!! - It's really inspiring writing and recording with Christian, he finds elements to fit in to a track that always amaze me. Also, he comes up with the best mixes for me.

I hope you're not too disappointed BJ isn't opening up the restrictions.....it makes sense to me and I think we'll be almost back to normal in a month....Loads of Love, Russ xxx

RUSS - LIFE STORIES

I ended the May autobiography piece saying how emotional I felt when the boys in the football voted for me to be team captain. It was about this time that I became aware of the 'Skiffle' craze. Skiffle was a form of music that was, how can I say, user friendly. I say user friendly, because, if you wanted to participate as a player, you didn't have to be a tutored musician. A Skiffle group consisted of guitar, bass, which was usually a tea chest with a broom handle through the middle and at the top of the handle, a thick length of string tied to the side of the tea chest. The player would then pluck the string. It wasn't important to pluck the correct note, just to make a deep resonant noise. The last and not least instrument is a wash board. You might not know what a wash board is, so....Going back, many years, before today's washing machines, your great grandmother would most likely have washed then scrubbed your clothes on a wash board.



The only player that needed to have some elementary knowledge of music would be the guitar player....I say guitar player, you could sometimes see four or five guitarists in a group, anyway, the only thing they needed to know was how to tune the instrument, then play the chords - E -A - B7. Well, that's all I needed. The songs used, were usually folk and old classic blues...."Oh Mary Don't You Weep" - "There's A Man Going Round Taking Names" - "This Land Is Your Land" - "She'll Be Coming Round The Mountain" - You didn't have to have a lead singer, usually everybody sang. It sounds very simple, but it was a lot of fun.

The artist who was most revered and [considered the creator of skiffle] was Lonnie Donegan....Strange, because Lonnie didn't have a wash board or tea chest in his group. He used a drummer and a bass player who played a real acoustic bass.

I first saw a skiffle group at Kings Road Summer Fete. Looking back, I don't think the group were a particularly good example of a skiffle group, however, I remember feeling quite excited by live music. After that Saturday afternoon I was determined to have a guitar. I plagued my mum and dad for one but they told me "keep practicing piano".

There wasn't much pop music on tv, so my friend and I found it very exciting when a music series started on BBC TV. It was called "Six Five Special" and it featured young pop singers, jazz bands and skiffle groups. It was hosted by Pete Murray, Jo Douglas and Freddie Mills. Pete was a radio DJ - [Before the term was coined] - Jo Douglas was a tv producer, who, for this show became presenter. The weird thing about the third presenter was, Freddie Mills , British middle weight boxing champion.

The signature tune was played by 'The Bob Cort Skiffle Group'. I really looked forward to those Saturday evenings, however, I remember being most excited when Tommy Steele was advertised to appear as the Star. I guess things were more naive , but when Tommy Steele came on playing a Hofner guitar and wearing a pullover with musical notes stitched in I was

a fan. Tommy Steele couldn't play guitar very well, but he was a star with that indefinable something.

GERMANY

Here is the poster for Russ's **It's Good To Be Here** tour in Germany in October 2021. At the moment the plan is to go ahead with 50% attendance. We know people are buying their tickets now so don't delay. Let's all keep fingers crossed!

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RUSS BALLARD

It's good to be here tour 2021

- 1.10 BONN HARMONIE**
- 2.10 MÜNCHEN MUFFATWERK**
- 3.10 NÜRNBERG HIRSCH**
- 5.10 ASCHAFFENBURG COLOSSAAL**
- 7.10 BENSHEIM MUSIKTHEATER REX**
- 8.10 DORTMUND PIANO**
- 11.10 AUGSBURG SPECTRUM**

NEW ALBUM

RUSS BALLARD
It's good to be here

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AVAILABLE AS A CD/DIGITAL/BLACK VINYL

FRIENDS

Those of you who had a go at Dave's Lockdown Quiz last July or saw his follow up "Cover Quest" article in the newsletter in August 2020, will know that a song written by Russ and Christian was featured in an episode of Friends, "The One With The Routine". The song was called The Trouble With Boys and it was played behind the dance routine. The song was also used in the recent reunion episode. You might have seen the video with Courtney Cox and Ed Sheeran reproducing the dance on Instagram. The song they are dancing to in that video is.....Russ's The Trouble With Boys.

<https://youtu.be/4MuIN-82Plo>



[Ed Sheeran and Courteney Cox](#)
[Dancing "Friends Reunion"](#)



#EdSheeran#CourteneyCox#FriendsReunionEd
Sheeran and Courteney Cox "Friends Reunion"

Dancing 🕺😂😂Ed Sheeran and Courteney Cox

Best Friends 🕺💃

[youtu.be](#)


PODCAST 1

A reminder of the podcasts from the Voices boys on Russ's website. The latest podcast is Bob Henrit part 1. **Bob Henrit part 2** will be coming up on 1st July. You can access all the podcasts here... <https://russballardmusic.com/podcast.html>

PODCAST 2

Very recently Russ did another podcast for, "It's Only Rock And Roll Podcast". This is a really good one! Very professionally done and you can hear how much Russ enjoyed doing it. The podcast is hosted by Don DiMuccio, who is very knowledgeable and has certainly done his homework. It lasts just over an hour. Earphones in while you are sitting in the garden!

<https://www.facebook.com/ItsOnlyRockAndRollPodcast/posts/328333635483118> and click on the Homepage link.

	<p>It's Only Rock And Roll Podcast Ep. 29 - 헉헉헉헉 헉헉헉헉헉헉헉헉헉 Frontman/ guitarist for 70's supergroup Argent and prolific songwriter, 헉헉헉헉 헉헉헉헉헉헉헉헉 joins The It's Only Rock And Roll Podcast, covering a career which began as a teen and... www.facebook.com</p>
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RUSS GIVE US THE BLUES

Russ made this video in his studio for our Facebook page. He recorded the backing track so he could play over it live. If you have already seen it, it is certainly worth watching again. I can't put the video directly into the newsletter as it is too big but this will take you to the Facebook post.

https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=4172494346149222&_tn=F

LETTERS

From Dave Williams

Re Richard Westwood's comment:

"Drums were incredibly expensive. I'd seen the Roulettes at Brooklyn Technical College and I'd stood right next to Bob Henrit's achingly beautiful Black Gretsch kit with an 18" bass drum. I'd wanted to chat to Bob but I was too shy and anyway he was talking to Dave Williams from the support band Finders Keepers who had a very nice sparkle Ludwig kit. "

I know Dave, my namesake. He originates from Cannock, but for many many years now, he's been living in Derby. He's still pro, and is touring with a musical company in a show called Beyond the Barricade. Our drummer knows him better than I do, but we were introduced a couple of years ago and he comes to see our band when we are playing locally, and we go to see his band (he plays in a blues band when he's not barricading). In fact, a few weeks back a drummer contacted me on Facebook asking when covid would allow me to resume giving him lessons. Clearly he was looking for the "other" Dave Williams. Dave and I were joking last year that we should get together and form The Dave Williams Band,

as we know yet another Dave Williams from Nottingham who plays guitar and keyboards, and I think he even knows another DW. It would be really funny to have a three or four piece band with all members having the same name.

So, getting back to the point of my email....Small World.

Dave

LEFSETZ LETTER

Russ was alerted by several people to a very good article about Argent. Bob Lefsetz is an American music industry analyst and critic. He produces a blog/email newsletter, which is very widely read in the US. He is known for being opinionated and often fiercely critical. There is not a lot of criticism here though. A good read!

<https://lefssetz.com/.../05/27/god-gave-rock-and-roll-to-you/>

FROM DAVE

A Song for Gail

Gail Lee Harvey (1955 – 2020)

A Song for Gail was a song that featured on Russ's 1976 album Winning. He recently revealed that he wrote the song after watching a TV Documentary called Gail is Dead, which was based on the tragic story of a young girl battling against her addiction to drugs.

Last year we lost a Gail of our own. Gail Harvey was most definitely a Russ Ballard fan. Sadly, she passed away last year, and in the months that have followed I have felt very strongly that some words should appear in the newsletter in memory of our friend, who always seemed to come across as fun loving and caring.

Gail was born on 16th April 1955 in San Bernadino, California to parents Frank Martin and Cheryl Montgomery. She attended Meigs Middle and Choctaw High School before finding employment with the Department of Children and Families / Brideway Center, where she excelled in her duties, winning many awards.

Gail first discovered Russ Ballard when he undertook a tour of the United States with his own line-up after leaving Argent. Aged 19 years old and working at a Ramada cocktail bar a couple of miles outside of Woodstock, New York, Gail's head was turned when she heard the band begin to play Hold Your Head Up.

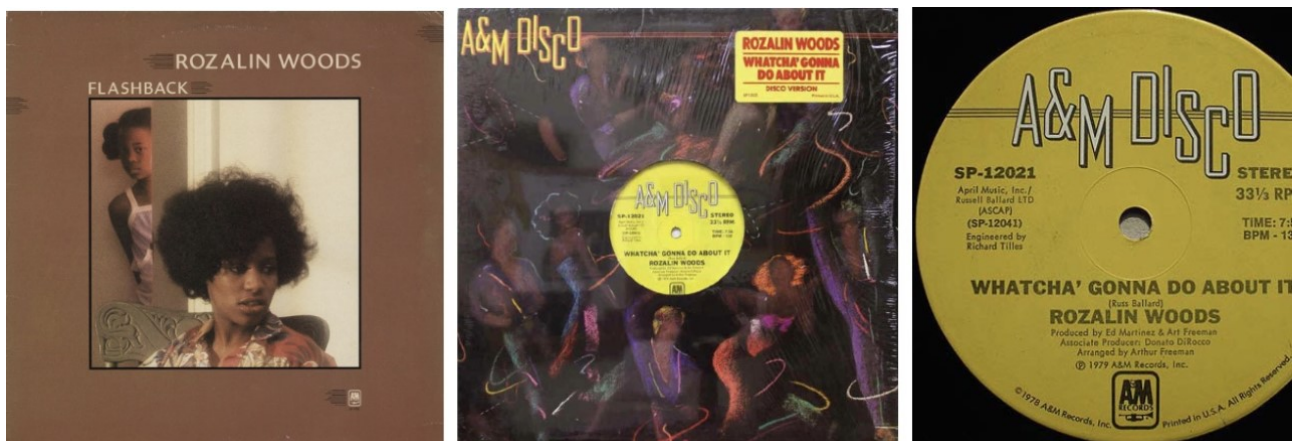
Turning to look at the stage, there was Russ surrounded by his band singing the song he made famous with Argent. She said she was so taken aback she almost went into shock. A more colourful report of the event was posted by Gail herself in the March 2018 edition of the newsletter.

From that point on, Gail continued to follow Russ's music career, saying that she admired everything he did in the following years, and this was reflected in occasional visits to the Facebook page as well as the newsletter. Sadly, Gail passed away on Saturday, May 16th, 2020, aged 65, at her home in Pensacola, Florida. She is survived by her daughter Devon Smith, son Taylor Clark, grandchildren, Levi Starling, Taylor, Landon and Ashton Reeves; sisters, Terri Byrne, Lisa Wright and Lori Neville; brother, David McClellan and niece, Kelly Byrne. Gail was very family-oriented and had many other children and grandchildren she took in along the way. She was taken far too early and will be dearly missed by all those who knew her.

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

This month features another Russ Ballard song that was presumably written for the publishing company he was contracted to at the time. The song was subsequently picked up by US funk / soul / disco producer Ed Martinez. If you used to enjoy watching the Kids from Fame TV show, this might well appeal.

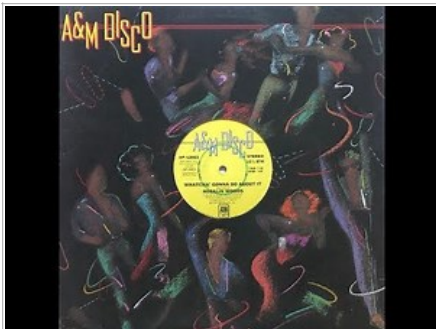
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Whatcha' Gonna Do About It by Rozalin Woods

Rozalin Woods is a disco singer who released an album called Flashback in 1979 at the height of the disco era. The album features seven songs. Leading with this Russ Ballard song, which is just 4 seconds short of 8 minutes long. Definitely one for the dance floor. I get the impression that this album was a project headed by producer Ed Martinez, using Rozalin Woods to front it. This might explain why Rozalin subsequently disappeared from the music scene never to be heard again. A & M Records thought highly of the album, releasing it in the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, Australia, South Africa and Japan. Their faith was repaid when four of the songs became disco hits; Flashback, Go Shake Yourself, All Over Again, and **most successful of the four**, Russ Ballard's **Watcha' Gonna Do About It**.

Turn the clock back to 1979 and indulge in 8 minutes of dance floor nostalgia. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kJmFim9AjU>



[Rozalin Woods - Whatcha' Gonna Do About It \(1979 Vinyl\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kJmFim9AjU)

1979 Vinyl A&M Disco (Photo inside video). Side A. Etichetta: A&M Disco – SP-12021 Formato: Vinyl, 12", 33 1/3 RPM, Stereo Paese: US Genere: Funk / Soul Stile: Disco <https://www.discogs.com/it/Rozalin-Woods-Whatcha-Gonna-Do-About-It/release/426801>

www.youtube.com