



(Header by Sven)

June 2022

Russ has done one of his special videos for us all from his studio. You might have seen it already on his Facebook page.

If you missed the interview on Boom radio, you have another chance to hear it in a choice of ways. Thank you to everyone who emailed me about the email I sent out about the interview. It was good to know that it was appreciated.

After a summer in the studio, Russ will be out on the road again later in the year. Below is a list of upcoming gigs. Hopefully, many of you will be able to get to at least one of them.

Dave's article this month has some very interesting statistics, which I am sure you will find surprising.

And thank you, Russ, for your lovely words! (Rationing!!! 🙄)

Sue

THIS MONTH FROM RUSS

It's been a busy month in the studio, that's just how I like it. Christian worked with me Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. We been reworking some songs from many years ago....it's something I've wanted to do, so I thought, now or never. Things happen faster with Christian engineering, getting sounds and suggesting stuff, also he's great company.

We had a couple of days with our new friends, 'The Stencil Pencils', the family group from Milton Keynes. Their father, John drives them here after school and we've laid down some recently written songs. Big brother Johnson is 14 years old, followed by Cale, he's 11, last but not least there's young sister Indi, who's 8. They're a talented bunch and brilliant people. At the moment the Stencils are playing festivals around the south of the country. If you get the chance go and see them, they're fab.

Some other great people in my life - Wonderful friends - I often wonder what I'd do without them....Sue Robinson, Carole Williams, Sven Kramer, Dave Williams and Ian Street.....Sue and Carole used to watch The Roulettes, with and without Adam Faith, - [I won't tell you how long that is but I think rationing had just finished]. Sue prepares everything on this Newsletter and Carole does the same for my Facebook. Dave writes a lot of very interesting information...even to me...in the newsletter. Sven lives in Bremen, Germany, and apart from starting "russballardmusic", he's also a brilliant artisan and Photographer.....Ian, lastly and certainly not least....has been a friend for, probably fifteen years and is, like myself, a music enthusiast. Ian, with Sven, started a Podcast, called The Voices of Russ Ballard. If you get to listen to them, they're brill. I'm a lucky man, I've had diamonds roll into my life - I wish you all the same in yours. Love, Russ

RUSS - LIFE STORIES

I finished last month's biog talking about my being immersed in guitar practice - alongside my hours of guitar, playing piano for hours every day. I loved the boogie woogie playing of Mead Lux Lewis and Fats Domino and worked hard trying to perfect some of their tunes.

I was always interested in the names of the writers below the title on the record label. There were some great pop writers at that time. Leiber and Stoller who were writing most of the Elvis songs - Along with them were Pomus and Schuman, Neil Sedaka, Mann and Weil....however, my favourites were Goffin and King, they were coming up with some great chord sequences and lyrical ideas, "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow", "Take Good Care Of My Baby", "It Might As Well Rain Until September" - I still think they're some of the most uplifting songs in pop music. I started writing little pieces on piano and guitar and found it fulfilling....The first piece I remember finishing was something I wrote on guitar, it was a Shadows influenced tune, I called it 'Atlantis'. I played it to the other boys and they said we should record it. Making a record was quite expensive in 1961, there weren't many studios around, if you could find one. They were usually a long way away. In our case we found one in London, Regent Sound was in Denmark Street. We booked three hours, it was enough time to record two songs - One was 'Travellin' Man', the Ricky Nelson song, and the other was my instrumental, Atlantis'.

It was the first time we'd been in a studio and I loved the whole process and couldn't wait to do it again.. Brother Roy suggested we should play the demo to Paul Stevens....Paul was married to Cliff Richard's sister Donella. Paul owned a coffee bar in Waltham Abbey, it was a place Roy and I used to hang out when we were in that area. Paul really liked the tune and said, "I'll send it to The Shadows publishing company"....needless to say, I didn't think it was very likely they'd even hear the tune, let alone record it.

We entered 'The Boys Clubs Of Great Britain' competition again and won the audition, which meant we went in to the final. As luck would have it, Moorfields Hospital said they had a bed available and were ready to insert a lense into the eye. Unfortunately, I was in hospital longer that the doctors thought. When it came to the competition date, I was still in hospital, I was very disappointed. However, The Daybreakers with Bill in the line-up, won The Frankie Vaughan Award. They all came to visit me next evening, bringing the award with them. I did feel very proud even though I hadn't been there.

Oh, I just noticed England are just about to play Italy in The Nations League....I'll write some more next month. Loads of Love, to everybody.....

RUSS VIDEO

Russ kindly recorded a video for everyone this morning (13/6). Christian was cameraman for him. It is on his Facebook page and on the Voices group page. I am sure you will enjoy this; it is unique. https://fb.watch/dCQgOSd5_C/



BOOM RADIO

I didn't need to panic. If you missed Russ's interview on Boom Radio, it looks like it will be repeated at 9pm UK time, this Thursday, 16th June. You can access Boom via your smart speaker, on a DAB+ radio, through many of the radio apps on your phone or tablet (Boom have their own app) or via their website, www.boomradio.co.uk. I have now downloaded the Boom app and they do have a "Catch up" on there.

UPCOMING GIGS IN 2022

A reminder that there are still some gigs to come during this year. Belgium in August, Portugal in September, UK in October and Germany in November. Tickets for most of these have been on sale for some time so, if you haven't got your tickets yet, it might be an idea to book them sooner rather than later. Google the venues for information.

August 17 th	Liege /Golden Age Rock Festival
September 30 th	Estoril /Casino Estoril
October 8 th	Hull /Wrecking Ball Arts Centre
October 9 th	Edinburgh /The Cave
October 12 th	Wolverhampton /KK's Steel Mill
November 1 st	Munich /Muffatwerk
November 2 nd	Nuremberg /Hirsch
November 3 rd	Bensheim /Musiktheater Rex
November 5 th	Aschaffenburg /Colossaal
November 7 th	Augsburg /Spectrum
November 10 th	Dortmund /Piano
November 11 th	Bonn /Harmonie

READERS VIDEO OF THE MONTH

Sent in by our friend, **Gordon Dickson** last year, here is an old favourite often to be seen on BBC4 late at night in a compilation of clips from The Old Grey Whistle Test.

<https://youtu.be/ElyImoxyOXw>



Argent - God Gave Rock & Roll to You - The Old Grey Whistle Test - 1973

Argent - God Gave Rock & Roll to You - The Old Grey Whistle Test
From the LP "In Deep", March, 1973
Rod Argent / organ & vocals
Russ Ballard / guitar
Jim Rodf...

youtu.be

RUSS'S MUSIC HISTORY

By Dave Williams

Popularity Stakes



Just a bit of fun this month. As part of my cover quest mission, I've been digging and hunting for many years now, looking for officially released songs written by Russ Ballard. My search has unleashed around 320 recordings, which doesn't include anything released under the name of **Argent** or **Russ Ballard**. It seems that every time I try to find a video link to a particular version of a Russ Ballard song, I frequently uncover something new that I've not previously come across. There's a lot of fish in the pond.

During the course of this 'research', I've been able to see a pattern emerging that appears to indicate which of Russ's songs are most popular. Naturally, it throws up some surprises. For example, I would never have known that there are at least four orchestral recordings of **Since You Been Gone**. That's a lot of strings, all added to Russ's bow! And (my English school teacher said you should never start a sentence with 'And'), who knew that there are at least five cover versions of **Are You Cuckoo**, the song that originally appeared on Russ's **Winning** album? That's only one less than the six cover versions I found for **I Don't Believe in Miracles**, which is arguably the best song Russ has ever written. Surely that number is questionable. There must be many more versions of the latter that I'm yet to discover.

I thought it might be a good time to share some of my findings, especially as I don't tend to feature the more familiar songs in the Cover Quest feature. I prefer to focus on some of the less well-known songs, because that's where you tend to discover a few gems, for example **Criminal Zero – Detective One** by **Black Market**. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fok-ukfvtt8>



[Black Market - Criminal Zero / Detective one \(1980\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fok-ukfvtt8)

ReggaeProd Russ Ballard <http://www.discogs.com/Black-Market-Criminal-Zero-Detective-One/release/4587912>
www.youtube.com

There are two other interesting things I've learned in the course of my cover Quest. The first one relates to musical genre. I'm sure when Russ writes his songs and produces his demos, they generally fall into a mainstream musical category, i.e., pop, soft rock, ballad etc. But, with a bit of vision, a song can be turned on

its head by giving it a different musical treatment. Indeed, Russ did just that, with his slowed down version of **Since You Been Gone** on **Its Good to Be Here**. Among my collection of 320 covers, those musical genres have been widened to include classical, r'n'b, house, hip-hop, electronica, metal, and so on. The other finding relates to geography. I'm amazed to learn that Russ's songs have been recorded so widely around the globe; Russia, Finland, Brazil, Sweden, Holland, France, Germany, Argentina, Greece and Austria and so many more, not to mention the UK, Ireland, America and Canada. Confirmation that Russ's songs are recognised worldwide.

So, which of his compositions are most popular in terms of being recorded by other artists? The results are tabulated below. I've taken the list down to songs that have been covered a minimum of 3 times. I daresay the song positions will move about over time as new versions are discovered and added to the list.

<i>Russ Ballard songs and the number of known recorded versions</i>	
<i>Since You Been Gone</i>	21
<i>New York Groove</i>	20
<i>I Know There's Something Going On</i>	17
<i>So You Win Again</i>	12
<i>God Gave Rock and Roll to You</i>	10
<i>I Surrender</i>	10
<i>Liar</i>	9
<i>Voices</i>	9
<i>I Don't Believe in Miracles</i>	6
<i>You Can Do Magic</i>	6
<i>Winning</i>	5
<i>Just Another Day in the Life of a Fool</i>	5
<i>Are You Cuckoo</i>	5
<i>Come and Get Your Love</i>	4
<i>Can't Let You Go</i>	4
<i>Riding With the Angels</i>	3
<i>No More the Fool</i>	3
<i>Can't Break the Habit</i>	3
<i>Can't Shake Loose</i>	3
<i>Can't We Talk It Over</i>	3

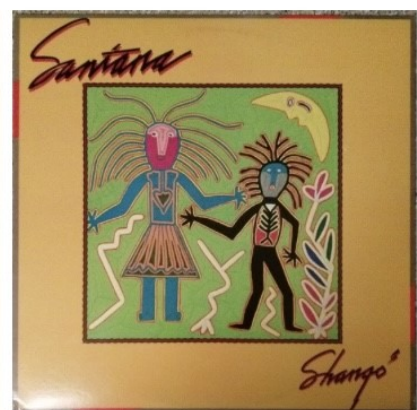
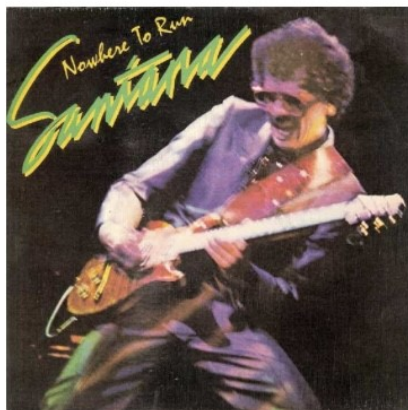
Quite a revelation I thought. No surprise to see **Since You Been Gone** at the top of the list, closely followed by **New York Groove**. The latter sounds great in anyone's hands, and there are at least 20 versions to discover. Interestingly, the top 10 songs in this list of 20, are all included in the current Russ Ballard live set, so Russ is managing to include the songs that most people will know and like, as well as being able to present a large number of favourites from his solo career and his time with Argent. Whilst I'm particularly pleased to see New York Groove

high on the list, I'm a little surprised, if not disappointed, that **Come and Get Your Love** hasn't been more widely covered, as it's a great song, and came across well when the band used to perform it in 1976. However, when you have so many great songs, something has to give. All I will say is, if you get a chance to see Russ Ballard and his band this year, grab the opportunity. Not only is he performing the cream of his repertoire, but the current line-up really ROCKS.

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

This month's Russ Ballard song comes from an American Latin-rock group formed by guitarist **Carlos Santana** in the late 1960s. Making an appearance at the **Woodstock Festival** in 1969, they would go on to release successful albums, including **Abraxas**, and **Santana III** in the 1970s accompanied by hit singles **Samba Pa Ti**, **Oye Como Va** and a cover of Peter Green's **Black Magic Woman**. The band is of course, **Santana**.

No.45



Nowhere to Run by Santana

I can only assume Carlos has quite a liking for the songwriting talents of **Rod Argent** and **Russ Ballard**. Having previously achieved success with cover versions of **The Zombies** hit **She's Not There** in 1977, Santana proceeded to release a cover of Russ's **Winning** in 1981. A year later, Santana released their **Shangó** album, with this month's chosen track, **Nowhere to Run**, issued as a single.

Produced by **John Ryan**, who's other productions include albums by **Rare Earth**, **Nowhere to Run** failed to make an impact on the charts. When I first heard it, my

initial reaction was that Russ would have recorded a much better version. It sounds like a forerunner to the songs that would appear on Russ's 1984 **Russ Ballard** album. Later, I found the chorus coming back to me and, that's a sure sign that Russ wrote it. I went back and listened to it a couple more times and now I really like it. Step aside Dustin Hoffman, Russ is the rightful owner of the title **Captain Hook!**

In choosing a video link to the song, I opted for a 'live' version. I played it a couple of times, and the band seem to be enjoying themselves. It certainly provides Carlos Santana with an opportunity to show off his guitar soloing skills. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4V_AMEJkOWE



[Santana - Nowhere To Run \(US Fest '82\)](#)

Martha Quinn, Alan Hunter, Nina Blackwood & Mark Goodman are on Facebook ! LIKE The Original MTV VJs page ! - <https://www.facebook.com/MTV80sVJ>
www.youtube.com

I don't think I've seen a band undergo so many changes in personnel as Santana. I've counted at least 68 musicians, many of them successful outside of the band. Nevertheless, they are still going strong today, and producing great music as they always have.