



(Header by Sven)

Welcome to our new readers this month.

Our newsletter friend, Markus Linten, often sends us things from Germany for inclusion in the newsletter. During Russ's recent German tour, Markus was lucky enough to go to two gigs. This month he has written about his experience at those gigs. He also did an interview with a local radio station after he requested that they play Voices. Below there is a link to the interview which was put together by Markus's son on YouTube, but, for those who don't speak German, Markus has translated the interview into English.

Thanks to Markus and thanks also to Michael Angel of Fugitive for sending us an interview Russ did for them.

Have a wonderful Christmas. We will be back in the new year.
Sue

FROM RUSS

Have a great Christmas and a happy and Peaceful New Year, everyone.

“May you be happy, may you be strong, May you feel you belong “

Love Russ

HAVE A VOTE

The Wrinkly Rockers Club are taking votes for their 2022 awards. Russ has been nominated in the "Best Rock" category. Please click the link, vote for Russ and submit your vote. You have until 31st December but why not do it now?

[https://www.wrinklyrockersclub.com/2022-wrc-awards-voting?](https://www.wrinklyrockersclub.com/2022-wrc-awards-voting?fbclid=IwAR2oCXVjpxSriqizKyicRVg1pw12Zus0m_IQgWqeVBYV8a6NYIOoPS8Hxn)

[fbclid=IwAR2oCXVjpxSriqizKyicRVg1pw12Zus0m_IQgWqeVBYV8a6NYIOoPS8Hxn](https://www.wrinklyrockersclub.com/2022-wrc-awards-voting?fbclid=IwAR2oCXVjpxSriqizKyicRVg1pw12Zus0m_IQgWqeVBYV8a6NYIOoPS8Hxn)
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GERMANY CONTINUED

From Marcus Linten

Russ Ballard & Band in Aschaffenburg and Bonn.

It must have been almost 30 years ago that I saw Russ the last time - together with Stan Bush in Cologne. And when I read about a tour in Germany I was absolutely happy; due to the pandemic I have kept my fingers crossed and hoped that Russ would catch up everything. If I'm honest – I hadn't conceived this to be possible . However, I bought two tickets for the Bonn concert – for me and my wife. But when I saw that there is a gig in Aschaffenburg I decided to buy another two tickets and to book a hotel. Aschaffenburg is just 200 km away from my home town.

Well, I must admit that I was a little excited when Russ and his fabulous band, at exactly 8 o'clock, came on stage. "Rene didn't do it" – his first song. We were somehow stunned - and then convinced that this is gonna be an unforgettable evening. The Colos Saal was quite full of people (I remember a concert of Symfo Rock legend Kayak in Cologne in May with 27 persons) and quite a lot were wearing tour shirts like the ones from Kiss, Rainbow, Ayreon, Hooters and even Hello (that was me).

It took two or three tracks and you got the impression: Russ had captivated the audience – he got them under control. The atmosphere was fantastic, a lot of guys singing strong-voiced all the songs Russ and his band performed so intensively, each song a masterpiece. Interesting to observe that some people obviously didn't know about the origin of "I know there's something going on", "You can do magic" or "So you win again". The songs of this evening the audience most appreciated: "Voices" of course, "Since you been gone", "New York Groove" and the two extra songs "I can't hear you no more" and "On the Rebound", the last performed by Russ alone. Time flies, and two hours later – the gig was over – my voice was undoubtedly damaged, although I've been singing for more than 30 years in a male choir

Six days later (11.11. – the starting of the carnival in the region of Rheinland!) I wanted to join the concert with my 21year-old son, yet my wife insisted to accompany us. She was still enthusiastic about the Aschaffenburg gig. My younger son also came with us, so the whole family enjoyed the Bonn gig. The sound was even more brilliant than in the Colos Saal, Russ was somehow fooling around and every musician of the band was performing on highest professional level.



My elder son and I got the chance to go backstage (thank you Sue) after the show. My son was somehow struck dumb, he almost forgot to take some pics. Later he said: "Dad, you've met a super star." "Yes, but also a fantastic guitar player, singer, composer and likeable person." Two great evenings in one week – thanks to all who had made the tour possible.

Being home again at midnight I turned on the radio and heard the warm voice of Errol Brown singing "But now I know that I'm the fool, who won your love to lose it all, when you come back, you win again". Thankfully we could catch a tour poster after the Bonn gig – it has been hanging on the wall in our house from that day on.



Radio interview with Markus

Interview / request „Voices“ by Russ Ballard on WDR4 on 18th of November 2022; presenter is Peter Illmann. He is well known because he presented the famous TV music show “Formel 1” in the 1980s

<https://youtu.be/CmdRlabgJq4>

Peter: Now I'm really pleased to talk to Markus from Hennef. Hello Markus.

Markus: Hello Peter.

Peter: This worked well. That's wonderful for I read that you want to hear Russ Ballard for a certain reason.

Markus: I really like to listen to Russ Ballard because I saw him last week in the Harmonie in Bonn together with my family. And now a lot of listeners may wonder: Who is Russ Ballard?

Peter: Aah (*little doubt* 😊).

Markus: Russ Ballard wrote a lot of hit songs for Hot Chocolate, Frida and Agnetha, America, Rainbow, Hello, and in fact I've known him about for 46 years – since I bought my first single ever “Star Studded Sham” from Hello, my favourite band in my early life. And from that moment on he has been accompanying my life.

Peter: Oh! Amazing. And how was it for you to see him? Was it like in earlier times? How did you imagine him, or did he get older?

Markus: Older we have all got – that's what you've said about Klaus Lage. I've seen him [Russ] in the 1990s in Cologne in the Alter Wartesaal and I did not really have great expectations. Yet I have to admit: now I was totally flashed, also my wife and my sons, 18 and 21 years old. Being 77 years old he made a crazy performance together with his band. Like a thirty year old guitar God, he played all the hits he had composed for himself or others. And that was brilliant; and I had the great luck to meet him backstage after the gig and talk to him; I realized that he is a really amazing, lovely, relaxed and friendly human being, like a real fellow. And I asked him: Are you're gonna go on tour again? And he said: Yes!

Well, you're 77 and I hope this will work again.

Peter: Is he really 77?

Markus: He looks like 60, behaves like 40. And well, among the hits he played was also "Voices". A lot of rock fans know this song that was featured in a Miami Vice episode.

Peter: Yes, indeed. You are perfectly informed about this. That's incredible, crazy. Do you have to deal with it professionally in the music business or so?

Markus: No, not at all. Ok, music is a great hobby of mine. And yes, I sing in a male choir here in Hennef. Apart from this I'm just a great fan of the music of the 70s and 80s.

Peter: Than you are right with us here. But I think you do not sing songs like the ones of Russ Ballard?

Markus: Unfortunately, not – but in our choir we sing Abba, Tote Hosen or John Miles' "Music" and other modern songs as well.

Peter: Really? Which means not the old folk songs?

Markus: Rather less, yet also Kölsche songs [*songs in a Cologne dialect*] and songs across country. And that's really great fun.

Peter: A choir that performs Tote Hosen – well, in this choir I would also like to participate.

Markus: You are welcome! Just come along, you're in the right age!

Peter: [Laughing]. Wonderful, that's what we do. Here's the man who has got even a better age, namely Russ Ballard. This is your request and we're gonna listen to the song you've been talking about: Voices. I wish you a pleasant evening and a lot of further wonderful concerts.

Markus: So do I. All best for you Bye.

Peter: Bye Markus.

FUGITIVE

Interview with Russ Ballard on the Collaboration with Fugitive

Russ has written several times about his recent collaboration with Fugitive. For a documentary about Fugitive, which will be out next year, Jason Burton did an interview with Russ. Parts of the interview will be included in the documentary but our newsletter friend, Michael Angel, has sent us the video of the whole interview. This was done on 28th October, just before Russ set off on his German tour. It is around 16 minutes long.

Michael Angel: "To hear Russ Ballard (In our opinion one of the greatest songwriters this country has ever produced), talk about our music in such a positive way is fantastic. Working with Russ on new music continues to be the most amazing experience we could have wished for as a musician. When someone of Russ's calibre offers you his insight and experience - you listen."

<https://youtu.be/kNrBOTNEBuI>

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

I have just thought of a new question for Russ: Has he ever experimented with different guitar tunings? As far as I'm aware, all his songs are in standard tuning.

Russ: *I have sometimes, however, not very often. On the Argent recording of 'Hold Your Head Up' I tuned the 6th E string down one tone to D as the song was in the key of 'D' it gave the sound an extra depth on the recording....years ago I did more like putting a D string instead of a low E also a B instead of a D. There's some interesting sounds. However, you really have to have a dedicated guitar for a dedicated tuning...which I never did do.*

AMATEUR HOUR

From Dave Williams

It's always fun to see Russ's songs tackled in an alternative way, rather than being a direct copy of the original, especially in the hands of amateurs. And by amateurs, I mean non-professional performers. There are countless covers of songs by Russ, not necessarily committed to CD or vinyl. We've previously featured a great version of **God Gave Rock and Roll to You** by **Wrap Party**, **You Can Do Magic** by **Sabrina's Crib**, and **Alexander Rastopchin's** version of **Liar**. Of

course, it all started in February 2021 with the discovery of a very enthusiastic Swedish choir performing **Since You Been Gone**. This performance was by **Unisoul Music** led by **Cecilia Nedgård**. The performance was so impressive, I tracked Cecilia down and interviewed her for the February 2021 Newsletter, which you can find here <https://russballardmusic.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2021-issue-2-version-2-february.pdf>

Another choral version in the same vein, has now been unearthed. Arranged by Owen Richards, conducted by Elaine Wilson & Clare Perris, this version is performed by the Southville, Clifton & Redland groups of **Riff Raff Choir** at St Paul's Church, Bristol, UK. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuzgSVIAn-Q>



[Since You've Been Gone - Riff Raff Choir - July 2017 - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuzgSVIAn-Q)

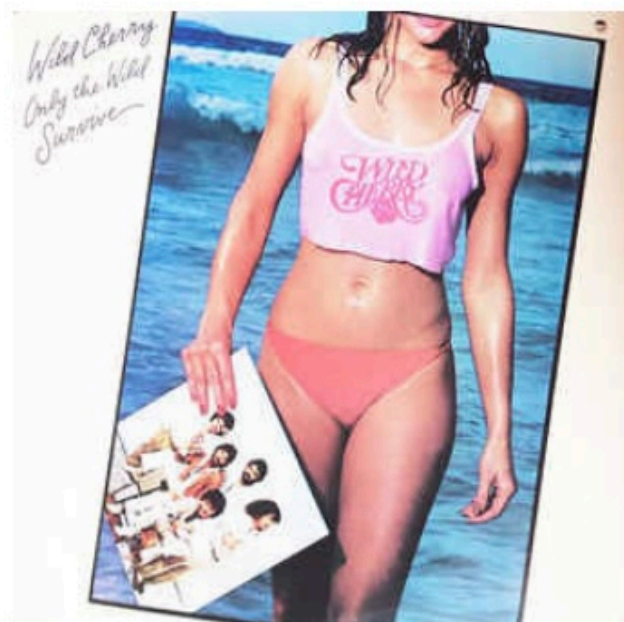
Since You've Been Gone by Rainbow/Russ Ballard, arranged by Owen Richards, conducted by Elaine Wilson & Clare Perris, performed by the Southville, Clifton & ...

www.youtube.com

The Riff Raff Choir have their own You Tube page, which features videos of many of their performances as well as their own website and Twitter account. Whilst this performance dates back to 2017, the choir is still very active in 2022, and currently geared up for Christmas performances.

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

In music circles, when you hear the name **Wild Cherry**, most people will immediately relate it to the 1976 smash hit single **Play That Funky Music**, which to this day is played by cover bands around the world, as well as by radio stations and night club DJ's. Ask those same people if they could name another Wild Cherry song title and I suspect that very few would be able to do so. They recorded four albums between 1976 and 1979, and it's the last of these that contains this rather nice Russ Ballard cover song.



Look at her Dance by Wild Cherry

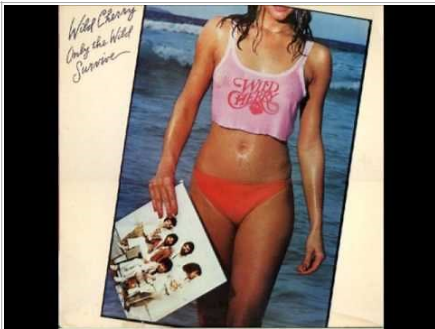
Formed in Ohio in 1970, **Wild Cherry** took their name from a brand of cough sweet, so it was inevitable I suppose that they would be noted for their 'Tunes' (apologies to our UK readers for this dreadful pun!). Under the leadership of guitarist Rob Parissi, the band initially played melodic hard rock, which brought them to the attention of Grand Funk Railroad's manager Terry Knight, who signed them up to his record label Brown Bag.

With success failing to come their way, the band split up soon afterwards. Parissi took a break from music before deciding to reform the band in 1975. Recruiting new members from the Pittsburgh area, the reformed Wild Cherry performed on the rock club circuit but by this time, audience tastes were veering towards dance-oriented music. At one of these shows, a member of the audience shouted, "Are you white boys gonna play some funky music?". Rob Parissi wrote the comment down on a notepad, and went on to write the song that would go on to achieve Platinum status.

Sadly for Wild Cherry, fame pretty much ended with that release. They would go on to record further albums and singles for Epic Records, including a handful of

Motown covers, with limited success. Their final album, **Only the Wild Survive**, released in 1979, included a cover of this Russ Ballard gem, originally performed by Russ himself on his **At the Third Stroke** album. Only the Wild Survive would prove to be Wild Cherry's final release, the band parting ways soon afterwards.

Copy and paste the You Tube video link below to listen to Wild Cherry's version of **Look at her Dance**. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKpDBLM-D6Q>



[Wild Cherry - Look At Her Dance](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKpDBLM-D6Q) [\(1979\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKpDBLM-D6Q)

from the 1979 album "Only The Wild Survive"
[www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKpDBLM-D6Q)