



(Header by Sven)

May 2023

A big welcome to our new readers. Send in your questions and Russ will answer.

It has been a busy month. Russ did the rock cruise and has done a lot of work in the studio. Then there was Eurovision...for new readers...yes, it is relevant. And Fugitive's album is out any time now. Thanks, as always, to Dave for his contributions. We have lots for you to read and listen to this month and if you have around an hour and a half to fill, we have the perfect thing down towards the end.

Sue

THIS MONTH - RUSS'S DIARY

Hi, my friends....it's been a strange spring....The daffodils came and went really quickly. The weather wasn't very kind...The cold days felt very cold and when the sun came out, it felt extremely warm. I'm glad to say, things appear to be changing and the weather's beginning to feel like early summer....Hooray!!

Three weeks ago I had a mail from my friend Michael Angel --[lead singer of Fugitive] letting me know the new Fugitive album - 'Nobody Gets Out Alive' - has gone straight in to the Amazon chart at number three....He sounded very 'up' which made me feel pretty good, because I'd been involved with some of the writing and recording. The album is released this week, I think - Now

they're getting ready to tour in support of the record. If you get the chance, go and see them. They're really good.

I'm glad to say, I'm in the studio most days. Recently, I've been working with David, guitar player, and Julie [singer] also known as The Duchess....Their group is known as 'Space Elevator'. They were originally going to support me on my 2020 tour of Germany....then the Pandemic hit us all and the tour was cancelled. We did meet just before Covid. They kindly invited me for an Indian dinner at my local restaurant and we hit it off well and stayed in touch and we decided to get together to write songs for a new album. I haven't written many songs with other people, however, I'm really enjoying it with them....I wrote a couple of ideas for them which turned out well and D and J have been turning up with new ideas. In listening to Julie's singing style, I could detect an exceptional performing style, I passed on my thoughts to Julie and she understood what I was trying to say....Well, I'm knocked out with her vocal performances and we appear to be finding new song ideas every day.....

I had to take time off recording for a week while I rehearsed with my great band...Marc Rapson [keyboards], PJ Phillips [Bass], John Miller [Drums] and Roly Jones [Guitar] for a 'Rock Night Cruise' Sweden. It's the first time I've played on a ship, however, I thought it was a brilliant experience, and what a great night it wasSeven other groups on the show.....Some friends I knew from some years ago. The audience was fabulous and so friendly. I sat with many people I'd never met before and in a matter of minutes I realised I had made new friends....And all through our love of music....I'd like to do it again. Two days later I was back in the studio working with David and Julie, writing and recording....Oh! how good can life become!

Well...That's my month past...I look forward to being in touch again with you in June.....Lots of Love, Russ xxx

RUSS - LIFE STORIES

Hello, My Friends - Spring has arrived and has seemed, at times, remarkably like Autumn, however, today [Sunday, 14th May] has been beautiful, with the promise of summer.....Autobiog....

I ended last month's biog telling you about our November 1963 trip to Hamburg, to play to the British troops that were stationed there at the time....

I say 'our' being Adam Faith and The Roulettes. I was then playing lead guitar as a member of the group.

After playing a concert for the officers, soldiers and their wives, then next morning being allowed to drive five British army tanks through a Hamburg forest, this particular evening we had off and we decided to eat in the city. We found a bar and sat down and ordered drinks. Our friend and agent Maurice brought our attention to two beautiful girls, who were looking our way. Maurice called them over....they were obviously well educated, from the very good English they were speaking. They told us that they were from East Germany, and that they were, in fact, refugees. These beautiful girls, probably 20 or 21 years old, explained they couldn't get jobs in the west, they didn't have passports. There was a lull in the conversation, suddenly one said, "We talk business now?" They were selling themselves, life seemed cruel...We declined and they walked away.

The next day we flew to Amsterdam to appear in a TV Show. It was called, The Rudi Carrell Show, very much a variety show, with sketches and dancing girls, very similar to our Sunday Night At The London Palladium. We stayed at The Hilton Hotel. After we checked in, we had lunch in the restaurant. It was a spacious place, with a white grand piano in the middle of the room. I was getting to know Tel's sense of humour....sometimes he was clown like, other times, very sarcastic. One of his favourite 'laughs' was sending somebody up in the restaurant....this day was my turn to be sent up. Tel said, "Do you like being in this group, Russ?" "Yeah", I said, "Well, go and play the piano for us"... "Not now?" - "Why?", he said. "It's packed in here", I replied, not really knowing how to take him, or, how to get out of this one...."So you don't like being in the band?", he said, straight faced....'In for a penny', I thought....I stood up, walked over to the Bechstein, sat down and started to play. Before I'd played more than a few chords, the head waiter appeared at my side, "Sorry Sir, I can't allow you to play"....."Thank goodness", I thought....I walked back to the table and sat down where the boys were falling about with laughter.

Maurice told us the director of the show wanted to take us for dinner. That evening we met at a place called The Blue Note. When we arrived, the waiter pushed three tables together, he then put two candles on each table. We sat down and the director talked to Tel and Maurice. There was another thing I was finding out about Adam Faith, he had low boredom threshold. When he was tired of a conversation, he'd find something to do to alleviate it. This particular evening, he was sticking matches into the candle nearest to him. I sat furthest

away but I saw everything...one match suddenly ignited, two. He was laughing! - I was thinking to myself, "No more" Tel!! But to him...he could see us laughing and he liked that - Five matches was the limit. The flame was very impressive but our director thought it was time to ask for the bill.

The Rudy Carrell Show was 'live', as were most TV shows in 1963. I chatted to one of the dancers, a pretty girl, typically Dutch, or that's what I thought. She told me her name was Connie. I told Connie we'd decided to go to a restaurant and would she like to come? She said "yes" and asked if she could bring a friend? We had a great evening but it was the one and only. I often wonder what she's doing now.

Well, my friends....That was my first trip abroad....Next month I'll continue my memoirs on my early days as a pro musician....Have a great Spring....Lots of Love, Russ xxx

ROCKNYTT CRUISE



Just before the cruise, Russ did an interview with Rocknytt. It is in Swedish but there is a tab at the top to translate it into several other languages.

<https://www.rocknytt.net/intervjuer/147653-russ-ballard-den-passionerade-hitleverantoren>

There are lots of videos from the cruise on YouTube. Just to give you a taster, here is Dream On. Have a look at some of the others.

<https://youtu.be/tw4T31AeQXc>

The girl group, Emotional Fire, who performed on the cruise, have released a four track EP, which includes Russ's song, Your Time is Gonna Come. They performed it the Saturday morning and Russ, with Roly, joined them on the stage.

<https://youtu.be/we50vXzxv70>

Norway Rock magazine did a review of the cruise and the first part of the article covers Russ's performance. Again, there is a tab for translation from Norwegian.

<https://norwayrock.net/rocknytt-cruise-viking-line-stockholm/>

LYRIC OF THE MONTH

We are going back a long way for this one. One of my favourite ever Russ songs but not as well-known as some.

"Oh love, if a friend is all I'll be, I'll be your friend, right to the end..."

Scroll down to the end of the newsletter to find the answer and listen to the song.

FUGITIVE

Fugitive's album, **Nobody Gets Out Alive**, with input from Russ, will be out very soon. If you have pre-ordered it, I understand that it will be with you before long. Here is a taster video for the album... <https://youtu.be/M6inTsrv304>

This is a great review, which mentions Russ, from Steven Reid of "Sea Of Tranquility". Thanks to Michael Angel for sending this to me. <https://www.seaoftranquility.org/reviews.php?op=showcontent&id=24338>

You can order the album on Fugitive's website... www.fugitiveweb.co.uk/shop

EUROVISION 1

It is May...Eurovision month. It lit up Liverpool, who hosted it on behalf of Ukraine this year, although the UK ended up in their usual position. Most of you will know, but for those who don't, Russ, with Chris Winter, wrote the UK Eurovision entry in 2001. It came a very respectable 15th. If you haven't seen it before, here it is, No Dream Impossible performed by Lindsay Dracass.

<https://youtu.be/qxrp0XzzpzY>

EUROVISION 2

NORMAL SERVICE RESUMED

From Dave Williams

Congratulations to Sweden on their Eurovision Song Contest Victory in Liverpool. I flitted in and out of watching the competition on TV, and year on year, it seems to me that the presentation seems to increasingly overshadow the music. Whether or not that affects the scoring, I don't know.

I've never been any good at predicting the front runners, and even before the competition was held, it seems that everyone had decided who was likely to win, obviously having already heard the songs. Following Sam Ryder's exceptional performance in 2022, I had high hopes that Mae Muller might achieve a respectable score and placing, but no, the United Kingdom was largely overlooked by the majority of countries. Admittedly, I never thought the song was strong enough to make the top five, but at the same time, I didn't expect it to finish second to last. Having said that, I thought the sound mix was way inferior to the other performances, and certainly Mae's vocals didn't come across at all. A pity, bearing in mind the message in the lyrics. Oh well, back to the drawing board.

Of course, back in 2001, the UK was represented by Lindsay D (aka Dracass), who sang No Dream Impossible, a song written by Russ Ballard and Chris Winter. This achieved a placing of 15th from a field of 23 entries. Not bad when compared to subsequent placings, where even veteran professionals like Engelbert Humperdinck and Bonnie Tyler managed to chalk up miserable scores.

Lindsay has agreed to an interview for the newsletter. Unfortunately, we couldn't get this completed in time to publish it to coincide with the competition, but hopefully we can bring it to you soon.

ARGENT - AGE OF AQUARIUS

Here is an interesting little video from the Zombies/Argent social media. Rod Argent and Steve Rodford in the Zombies' dressing room listening, for the first time, to an acetate of Argent's performance of Aquarius, which they never recorded but performed in their early concerts. It is Russ on vocals, although, it doesn't really sound like him at the beginning.

<https://www.facebook.com/ArgentRockBand/videos/245780168009309/>

You can find an audio of the performance at Filmore West in 1970 here. This video also has that wonderful drum solo from Bob Henrit in The Fakir.

<https://youtu.be/1PQOnJlpSuk>

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

Band in a box? Not exactly, but this month's featured band originate from a village called Box in Wiltshire, England.

No.57



Two Silhouettes *by* Bronz

New Wave of British Heavy Metal (NWOBHM) band **Bronz**, were formed in the mid-1970s in the southwest of England. They began to gain prominence in the early 1980s playing festivals, including Glastonbury. Signed by the well known

Bronze (no relation) record label, they released their first album **Taken by Storm** in 1984. A follow-up album was recorded in 1985 but was never released due to Bronze Records going into liquidation. Bronz subsequently split up before reforming with a slightly revised line-up in 2000. Two albums were released before the band broke up again. In 2010, the unreleased album finally gained a release thanks to Tune Records. The album, titled **Carried by the Storm**, features a cover version of Russ Ballard's **Two Silhouettes**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ds4D2pk0MqU>

In July 2013, founder member **Shaun Fitzpatrick** was working on new material at the time of his death from a suspected heart attack.

LYRIC OF THE MONTH - ANSWER

>From Russ's first self-titled album....."You Can Count On Me".

<https://youtu.be/JsHJ2EFU890>

