



(Header by Sven)

September 2023

Welcome to all our new readers.

We have gig news...something different in Germany next year. If only we could get something like this in the UK!

Did you enjoy seeing Space Elevator at the party in July? I have seen many complimentary comments. Scroll down to see what they have been working on other than their album with Russ. It's big!

We need you all to contribute....send me your favourite lyrics, a question for Russ like Elizabeth this month or your own story like Carlo. I have a couple of questions in hand but they will appear. Thank you to Elizabeth, Carlo and, of course Dave for your contributions this month.

Sue



THIS MONTH - RUSS'S DIARY



HELLO, MY FRIENDS - HERE WE ARE, SEPTEMBER... Why does time appear to fly by. When I was young, that six weeks holiday from school seemed to last forever? People have said, we get older, metabolism slows, so time appears to be

faster. Well, I don't know , it's just something that comes to mind every time August becomes September....Anyway, I wish you an enjoyable Autumn.

What's been happening in my world this past month? Tuesday 1st August started with my friends Julie (The Duchess) and David Young from Space Elevator, they were here to continue writing with me, songs for their next album. It's always an uplifting event when we 'work ' together (well it's not really work, it's play).

After that day I didn't see much more of them in August as they hit the road around the UK playing gigs. So, most of August I was in more familiar mode, in my studio playing guitar, playing keyboards and writing alone.

You might know that my grandsons, Archie, 17, Emi' 15 and Lennie 14 are keen footballers - they're good and they all play for different teams. Emi played for Watford Academy but recently signed for Wolves. He recently was called to play for the England  under 16 squad against Italy, which was a brilliant time....So, Karis and Sam, Emi's mum and dad, invited me to join them on a trip to Florence to see the match at  Italy's national training ground. It was a thrill to watch the match along with mums and dads, relatives and friends, of both teams. As we're used to seeing with the First team Internationals, the usual formalities were carried out. Walking on to the pitch together, standing in line as the anthems were played, was quite emotional. We were told that Emi had done well at training and was in the starting eleven playing on the right wing. The England team started strongest and up until the first water break (at twenty minutes) were winning one nil. At the restart Italy scored after a corner and the game was very even, however, Italy scored twice more and the game ended 3 - 1. The two teams played again two days later. That match ended a draw 1 -1.

Once back home we were still trying to recover from the Dream, when the Wolves head coach phoned to ask Sam, "How quickly can you get Emi here to Wolverhampton? The first team need him (on the bench) for tonight's Carabao Cup against Blackpool". Well, I know it all happened in the space of ten days...I was there to see everything, and it wasn't even April 1st so it must be true... 



*I'll be with you again in October ...lots of Love,
Russ xxx*

RUSS - LIFE STORIES

Biog, continued...June, 1963....THE GRAND THEATRE, BRIDLINGTON...

The theatre held around 1000 people. There were only stalls which made the space quite homely. After the first night was over, we started to relax and found the town a friendly place. The Yorkshire people had a reputation for being warm and locals certainly were. The show was billed as 'IT'S A GRAND NIGHT'. It was old fashioned entertainment, even by 1963 standards...very much 'Family Entertainment' with comedy sketches and some impressive staging. There was one scene that opened the second half, it was 'The Ascot Gavotte', taken from 'MY FAIR LADY'. When the curtains opened, the girls were standing completely still, wearing beautiful Edwardian costumes and parasols as in a freeze frame photograph. The audience applauded the scene every single night. When the music started, the girls would glide across the stage, then we would walk on to the stage dressed in plus fours, pink and white jackets, and straw boaters and politely nod to the girls as they passed.

As we walked across the stage we all sang the song, 'Ascot Gavotte' - "Everyone who should be here is here" etc....Then the music changed to waltz time and The Roulettes approached the microphone and in upper class English accents, we sang, "JOSHUA, JOSHUA nicer than lemon squash you are" - Oh they don't write songs like that anymore....I know what you're thinking, "Why would four hooligan rock and rollers allow themselves to be so humiliated on stage in front of 750 people?" I understand what you say, but the money was good....and to be honest, it was loads of fun.

I'll continue the Summer Season next month (right now I have to lie down to recover from the part of Ascot Gavotte and Joshua...I'll be fine after a good night's sleep). Lots of Love, Russ.

TOUR 1- GERMANY

Russ is doing something a bit different next year. Lucky Germany! He is the "Very Special Guest" in this production of Rock meets Classic and is playing with an orchestra instead of his band. This will be the first time Russ has performed with a full orchestra. I know there has already been a lot of interest since Carole put this on Russ's Facebook page so, if you would like to go, maybe get your tickets sooner rather than later.

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11.04.2024	KEMPTEN	16.04.2024	OBERHAUSEN	20.04.2024	NÜRNBERG
12.04.2024	PASSAU	18.04.2024	INGOLSTÄDT	21.04.2024	WÜRZBURG
13.04.2024	REGENSBURG				

TICKETS AB SOFORT AN ALLEN BEKANNTEN VORVERKAUFSTELLEN - WWW.ROCKMEETSCCLASSIC.DE

ROCK MAGAZIN eclipsed **Rock** planha **START** **ETIMES** **Rock It!** **guitar** WWW.METALGIGS.COM **Hard Rock CAFE**

TOUR 2 - UK

Russ's UK tour is only a couple of months away now so here is a reminder of the dates. If you are reading this on a phone, this will be easier to read if you turn your phone round to landscape.

7 th November	The Beaverwood	Chislehurst, Kent
9 th November	Nell's	London
10 th November	HRH Prog Festival	Great Yarmouth
11 th November	The Tivoli	Wimborne
17 th November	The Wrecking Ball	Hull
18 th November	Long Street Blues Club	Devizes

MERCHANDISE

I was surprised and delighted at the response we got to our sale of merchandise. Thank you for ordering. I have been sending it out all over the world. The only thing we have sold out of completely is the t-shirt with songs, size M, although there are not many of the other t-shirts left. We still have CDs, lyric posters and lanyards. Photos and details are in the previous "Merchandise For Sale" email. The CD is the live CD many of you will have bought previously but only 200 were put into this packaging, for those who like to collect every version of every album. There is still time to order. In fact, you can order any time and I will pack up and post. Just email me at this address, russ.b.news@hotmail.co.uk and I will sort it out for you. If you would like me to send the merch email again, you just have to ask.

LYRIC OF THE MONTH

I think it might be a little more difficult this month, so a double clue. You have to go back a bit again but not as far as Argent. 10 points if you can get this one.

Who knows why we say what we say

And think what we think.

.
.

We are who we are

We do what we do.

Scroll to the end to find the answer and to listen to the track.

READERS STORIES

From Carlo Rossini

The Russ Ballard Album to me is what defines my teenage awakening! (if not too dramatic). As I approach my 65th birthday I was lucky to be introduced (indirectly) through my beloved older brother who, unfortunately, died when he was 35 in 1987. However, he did introduce me to the Zombies and hence ultimately to Rod Argent. My first album purchased was in 1972 with the classic "Hold Your Head up" single from the All Together Now album. Believe me I was hooked but not just on the music but on Russ – his image to a 13yr old boy was cool and he was

the man! Anyway, after realising I was not in the same league, I still had the good sense to listen and appreciate the music.

I am not musical but to a teenage boy in the 70's and as all teenagers experience their first love – "I Don't Believe In Miracles" is my favourite Russ song. I mean "God Gave Rock & Roll To You" was perfect for the image but when the inevitable happened, the lines from "I Don't Believe In Miracles " definitely hit the spot.

Hence, to finally get to the point – the key lines for me from this song are:

"...and I believe that somewhere there is someone who's going to light the way when things go wrong. The bullet that shot me down was from your gun. The words that turned me round was from your song..." and ultimately the title summing the feelings clearly followed with "..... I thought you might show your face or tell me where you are...." Really did dig deep!

In fact, it is wrong to say what my favourite Russ song is as, like a good whisky,... all are good but the current best reflects your current mood!

Thanks again for helping us all to relive the dream and it really is appreciated.

Kind regards
Carlo

And PS: although Colin Blunstone is brilliant at this – I (honestly) believe Russ delivers it best!

SPACE ELEVATOR

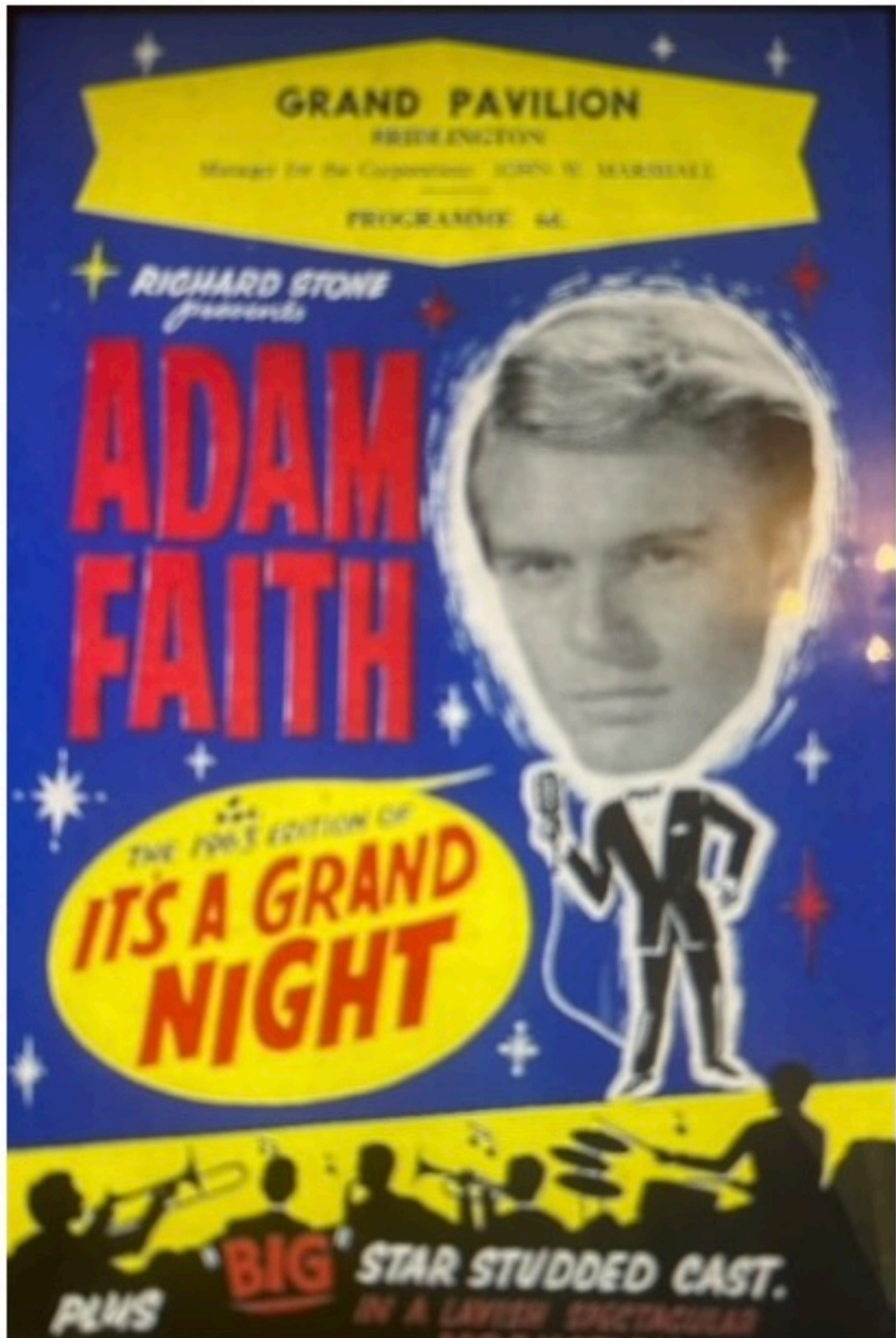
You have been reading a lot from Russ about working with Space Elevator on their up-coming album. And, if you were at our party in July, you will have heard David and The Duchess for yourselves. They have been asked to take part in an album marking 50 years of Queen and 33 years of the Innuendo album. Artists from around the world will be contributing tracks from the Innuendo album and Space Elevator have recorded the title track, which is a bit special. The album will be released later this year.

Have a look at this, the official video!

<https://youtu.be/DWDP8umMGMA?si=--l46B2mvFShEcpq>

DAVE'S ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

We're all going on a Summer Holiday!



As you know, Russ is currently telling us about his experience of working a Summer Season in Bridlington in the Summer of 1963. Some of us are old enough to remember the Great British Seaside Holiday, where holidaymakers would flock to the coast for a well-earned vacation. Very few people in the 50s and 60s ventured abroad, and the destination usually depended on what part of the country you lived. Londoners might head for Margate or Brighton, Blackpool and Morecambe attracted large numbers of Mancunians and Liverpudlians, and a similar pattern existed right across England, Scotland and Wales. Right around the coastline there were seaside towns with Pavilions, Theatres and Piers as well as caravan sites, hotels, b and bs and holiday camps such as Butlins and Pontins. By day, holidaymakers would visit a funfair, paddle or swim in the sea, fly kites, build sandcastles, ride donkeys along the beach or just lay back in a deck chair soaking up the, often paying the price later, with copious applications of calamine lotion to soothe those red necks and shoulders. After the sun went down, these families needed entertaining, and that's where amusement arcades, theatres and pavilions came to life. Not forgetting Bingo, which still remains popular today, though not with me I have to say.

Interestingly, it was on one such holiday at Mablethorpe on the east coast, that I first became aware of the talents of our very own **Russ Ballard**. It was the Summer of 1972 and **Argent**'s single **Tragedy** was gaining some heavy rotation on 247 metres medium wave, aka (BBC) Radio One. Sure, I highly rated their breakthrough hit Hold Your Head Up, but for me, Tragedy, was a revelation. Too good to be a big hit in my view, but that's another story.

Most of the big seaside resorts would put on a variety show, which would run over the summer months. This created an abundance of work for singers, groups, comedians, dancers and all kinds of novelty acts. A big attraction would be the headline act, for example Morecambe and Wise or Ken Dodd, even The Beatles one year at Margate. Not forgetting **Adam Faith** of course. Once the jet age arrived, package holidays abroad became more affordable and the guarantee of hot weather in countries like Spain became a more attractive proposition. How ironic that recent events like Covid and Brexit have helped to re-invent the "staycation".

So back in 1963, **Adam Faith** was chosen by presenter and top agent, **Richard Stone**, to be the headline act in a show titled '**It's a Grand Night**'. The show would be performed over the summer months at the **Grand Pavilion** in **Bridlington**, a North Sea coastal town in the East Riding of Yorkshire. The town lies about 28 miles north of Hull and 34 miles east of York, quite a trek for **Russ** and drummer **Bob Henrit** in Russ's Renault Dauphine, a popular car at the time,

and I'm sure the pair would have been quite apprehensive about what lay ahead for the coming months. Audiences would be largely made up of holidaymakers from areas such as Sheffield, Leeds and Bradford.

The theatre itself, was an art deco building dating back to the early 1930s, with seating for 1100 people, sufficient capacity to attract big name artists. In the year in question, Terry Scott and Hugh Lloyd had spent a week at the theatre, as part of the final two-week preparations for the start of the Summer Season. The pair were well known on British television having appeared in comedy series *Hugh and I* and *The Gnomes of Dulwich*. Terry was probably better known for his appearances in the *Carry On* film series, as well as his work with June Whitfield. Then, for the second week, the versatile singer and comedienne Joan Turner, a massive star at the time.



Terry Scott and Hugh Lloyd (left) and Joan Turner (right), led the preparations for the 1963 Summer Season

As mentioned, **Adam** was billed as the star guest, topping the bill with **The Roulettes** backing him, but as **Russ** mentioned in the last newsletter, **The Roulettes** were not there solely to accompany **Adam**, and they would find themselves being utilised throughout the show with some of the other artists. So, who else was on the bill? Well, I did a bit of research and here's a rundown of some of the other people involved, not just performers, but also some of the non-performing key players:

Richard Stone, an ex-army colonel, as the presenter, was the man responsible for the show. He conceived the whole thing and, as a presenter and top agent, he had already gained a reputation for providing high quality events at several theatres and resorts throughout the country, as well as organising entertainment for Butlins holiday camps. He gained much of his experience during his time in the army, where he put on entertainment for the forces during the war. Richard assembled a team of artists for his show.

Besides his main artists, Richard required an orchestra and some dancers. For this he acquired the services of **Stanley Ashforth**, with his ten-piece orchestra. The dancing was provided by a dozen girls dubbed '**the Pavilion Lovelies**'. Their names, April, Yvonne, Sandra, Sally, Pauline, Aileen, Edna, Christine, Pat, Auriol, Judy and Wendy.

Comedian and actor **Tom Mennard** started life as a bus driver in Brighton. He became involved in amateur dramatics, where his performances attracted the attention of a singer who suggested he should audition for the BBC. As a result of the audition, he was entered into The Centre Show, a BBC talent show presented by Benny Hill. This led to some theatre work, initially working with Bill Waddington, who later played Percy Sugden in the British TV Soap Coronation Street. Tom's trademark was the telling of stories in a long, drawn-out style. He had a long career in stage variety, TV and Radio. He passed away in November 1989 aged 71.



Comedians Tom Mennard (left) and Bobby Dennis (right)

In addition to Mennard, Richard Stone brought in Hull born comedian **Bobby Dennis**. Born Robert Gomersall, he walked out of school at the age of 13 and, lying about his age, auditioned for a touring show, We're in the Army Now, where he was taken on as a singer under the name of Bobby Dennis. Again, with the help of a recommendation from Benny Hill, Dennis established a career as an excellent stand-up comedian with a great tenor singing voice. He was also a very talented pianist, qualities that led to a long career in music halls and theatres. According to his obituary in The Guardian newspaper, written by his daughter Caroline, Bobby featured regularly in the **Billy Cotton Bandshow**, and later appeared in British TV comedy shows **Hi de Hi** and **It Ain't Half Hot Mum**. His last performance was in 2019 at the Royal Hippodrome in Eastbourne, with Roy Hudd and Anita Harris, at the grand old age of 93 years old. He passed away a year later in 2020 at the age of 94. Here's a video clip of Tom Mennard's act.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80nN04hfyb4> and here's a clip of latter-day

Bobby Dennis <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0lid4WmsSY> . Both funny men. I can't help wondering whether Al Murray based his comedy act on this Tom Mennard feature.

A variety show usually features a novelty act, and this would be provided by husband-and-wife team **Jean and Peter Barbour**. Peter, grandson of comedian Al Norman, began performing with his brothers Roy and Geoffrey, their speciality being performing their act on stilts. Peter had the idea of fitting steel taps to the bottom of their stilts, resulting in them becoming a very successful dance act working both in Britain and abroad. The act would also feature a string puppet show, again performed on stilts. Later, Peter met his future wife, Jean Dooley, and the two of them continued in the family tradition. Jean retired in 1975 and was replaced by their daughter, Sue, until Peter retired in 1998.



Reaching New Heights - The Barbour Brothers performing their string puppet show on stilts.

As part of a **Theatre Archive Project** with the **British Library** in conjunction with the **University of Sheffield**, Sue Barbour carried out an interview with her mother Jean. It's a long interview, but well worth listening to, if only to hear if the Bridlington shows are mentioned and it can be reached on this link <https://sounds.bl.uk/sounds/jean-barbour-part-1-amp-2-1001487285920x000002>.

I've very little information on the other two performers. **Tina Scott**, is described as a "most vivacious and attractive soubrette". According to Wikipedia, in theatre a soubrette is a comedy character who is vain and girlish, mischievous, light-hearted, coquettish and gossipy). Tina had previously worked with Benny Hill in one of Richard Stone's shows seven months previously. **Joanne Michelle**, a young soprano, previously appeared in Summer Seasons in Jersey and Worthing. She was engaged for a season with Sadler's Wells Opera company but requested her release to perform in the Bridlington Show.

Variety Shows always require a good Company and Stage Manager. **Donald Auty** was one of the best, a veteran of stage production, learning his trade from his Uncle Jack whilst growing up in Blackpool. Don loved his profession and recorded a lot of his experiences in written articles before his passing in July 2014. Of special interest is an article he produced called **Bridlington Summer 1963**, where he talks about some of things I've mentioned here and much more. To avoid infringing copyright, and just as importantly, for the enjoyment of readers, I've provided the following link to his article <http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/Bridlington.htm#pav>. You will need to scroll down a few paragraphs, but it's easy to find. I did smile at his comment about **Adam Faith**, describing him as "young and unruly in those days".

That, of course, just leaves **Adam Faith and The Roulettes**, separately and together. I can leave Russ to handle this. To learn more from a **Roulettes** perspective, I should add that drummer **Bob Henrit** shares a few of his own stories of the shows in his excellent book **Banging On!** where he talks about the elements of the show itself and some of the mischief that the boys got up to. Incidentally, Bob's book is a must-buy for Adam Faith, Roulettes and Argent fans, if you haven't already done so.

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

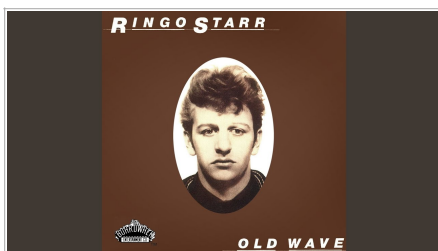
This month features a song that was never recorded by Russ as far as I know, so it's an original. Let's not split hairs though, especially as this recording is by one of the most famous pop musicians on the planet.

No.61



As Far as We Can Go *by* Ringo Starr

Russ flew to Sweet Silence Studio in Copenhagen to produce an album for Ringo. Unfortunately, his involvement was cut short when he had to return home for personal reasons. Joe Walsh took over as his replacement. Russ did manage to contribute a song. Titled **As Far as We Can Go**, the song was recorded at Sweet Silence on 23rd July 1978, but on the album release, only the vocal track was used. The other parts of the song were re-recorded by Walsh, using brand new synthesizer technology. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jpxf4AQY3Ac>



[As Far as We Can Go](#)

Provided to YouTube by The Orchard EnterprisesAs Far as We Can Go · Ringo Starr · Russ BallardOld Wave© 1983 © Boardwalk Records™ a division of 43 North Broa...

www.youtube.com

With Ringo looking for a new recording label after leaving RCA, it would be 1983 before Old Wave hit the record stores. Only two singles were released; **In My Car** in Germany only, which also included Russ's song, and **I Keep Forgettin'**, which was a Mexico only release.

Old Wave was re-issued on CD in 1994. This featured the original version of **As Far as We Can Go** as a bonus track.

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



[Ringo Starr - As Far As We Can Go \(original 1978 version\)](#)

The beautiful original version of "As Far As We Can Go". Hasn't been on Youtube for a while. This version is a bonus track for the "Old Wave" album.

www.youtube.com

LYRIC OF THE MONTH - ANSWER

From an album that is very dear to me, Russ's 1974 self titled album, Danger Zone 1. Have a listen.

<https://youtu.be/qilOR2K5Hk0?si=Yqr2aPGlcOc44XEN>