



(Header by Sven)

## November 2023

A big welcome to our new readers. We have had a good influx recently.

Russ's UK tour is now over and it has been very successful. I went to the last gig of the tour in Devizes, where he played to a full house and he and the band sounded brilliantly strong. (And I loved the soundcheck!). The newsletter is a little later than usual due to the tour.

We have more gig news. It looks like Russ is going to be busy next year.

Big congratulations are due to Russ. See below.

Thank you so much to Ryan Nagy, Les Lynyard, Brian Barry and, of course our own Dave for their contributions this month.

Sue

## THIS MONTH - RUSS'S DIARY

*I prepared for the short live tour by changing the opening song of the set. I chose a song that I wrote for Argent I think in 1973, it's titled "It's Only Money". I made contact with my friends in the group, that's Marc Rapson (keyboards), PJ Philips (bass player), Roland Jones (guitar) & last but not least, drummer John Miller. I*

*asked if they would listen to the original, after which, I had suggestions to shorten the arrangement.*

*We had two days rehearsal, then we were off on tour, firstly, on **7<sup>th</sup> Nov**, to **Beaverwood**, a venue with a great atmosphere. Some friends were in the audience, that's always a good feeling. We opened with 'Its Only Money " and the audience sounded very enthusiastic, which helps to settle any nerves. After the show, my friends appeared in the dressing room and we had natter. It was good to see Rob Davies's smiling face... We wrote a song together some years ago ...we discussed the ups and downs of the music business - then it was home and a day off.*

**9th. Nov. Nell's Kensington.**

*After the soundcheck, I checked in to a hotel just 5 minutes from the venue, mainly because the dressing room in Nell's is too small for musicians and friends. The performance was well received and very enthusiastic. It's always brilliant meeting fans you've never met before... I met two guys who told me they'd flown to the UK from the US for the show, which is quite moving.*

**10th Nov. HRH Great Yarmouth.**

*The journey to Yarmouth seemed to take a long time, however, once in to the set, it was the same enthusiast reaction from the crowd.*

*12th Nov. I did a telephone interview with Devizes radio and interviewer named Mark Jones. He asked questions about the next show that was coming up on*

**17th Nov. in Hull at The Wrecking Ball Arts Centre...** *We played this venue last year and again, the crowd are very extrovert and joined in singing the songs with myself and the band. Someone sent a good review of this show.*

**18th Nov. Long Street Blues Club, Devizes....**

*What a beautiful area, Devizes, Cheltenham and the surrounding towns, Bath, Burford and Broadway. My dear friends Sue and Bob Robinson came to see the show....Although I'd known Sue for many years, I didn't realize it was an ambition she'd carried to see a soundcheck.... For us as musicians it's something that's happened at shows for decades, (basically, sound checking means playing a song or two to get a sound balance for the musicians and the person mixing "out front"). After the check, I thought it would be good to take the group Marc, Roly, John, PJ, our tour manager Paul, Sue and Bob for a meal before the show .... What can be better than good friends, a good Indian dinner & wine with music ....oh! It's a good life!!*

*Be Happy....Love, as ever.*

## **RUSS - LIFE STORIES**

*Hi My Friends....My Biog, Continued.....*

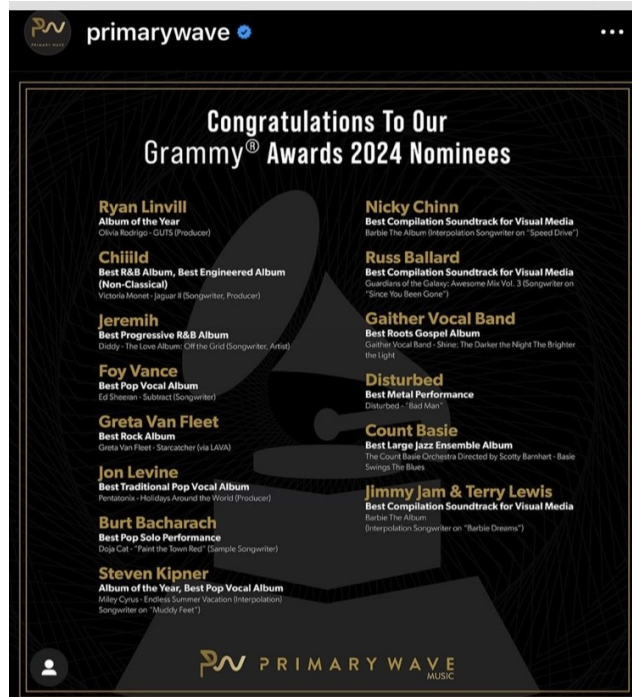
*I left last month with us - [The Roulettes] - half way through playing a summer season in Bridlington, the year was 1963, the month, early August. This particular story is not from the actual Bridlington show, but from one of the Sunday Concerts we played every Sunday all over England, while every Monday to Saturday through May, June, July and August, we appeared in the Bridlington show. The Sunday concerts took place in theatres in other holiday resorts where other*

*summer seasons were taking place. As in Bridlington, other theatres in other resorts chose to keep their theatres free for a different show for different artists on Sundays. Every Sunday we travelled to a different town....Blackpool, Morecombe, Scarborough, Isle of Man....This particular Sunday Concert we were booked to play in Yarmouth....to be exact....on the pier....It was not a particularly memorable gig, except for one thing, a group called The Beatles were playing in the same town. That summer of 1963 The Beatles were beginning their domination of the pop scene - everyone was caught up in the phenomenon. They had released their first two singles, 'Love Me Do' and 'Please Please Me' and their third, 'She Loves You' was just released as we started the season. The Beatles were everywhere - on the front of newspapers - on TV news and Variety Shows....There was Beatles merchandise.....Their faces were on coffee mugs - wallpaper - Toys - Bedspreads....They were all over the place at the time. It seemed the world was ready and waiting for something new. The teenage culture had started with James Dean and most young guys wanted to be like him. Pop music had followed with Bill Haley and then Elvis had taken over with what the American media had called 'Race Music'. Here was a charismatic white guy singing the kind of songs that had only been sung by black people. Elvis, like James Dean, had attitude. he looked moody, and it was something young men liked to identify with. Elvis's music was edgy and exciting with songs like 'Mystery Train' and 'Heartbreak Hotel' and 'Hound Dog' - He then lost his edge and became an all around entertainer....It was something that happened to other pop stars and our boss Adam Faith was no exception - The exciting music of 1956 - 1960, had been replaced by inoffensive songs and the World seemed to be waiting for a new phenomenon.....and The Beatles fitted the bill, and they were more than just great exciting music. They swept through the western world like a tsunami, washing away everything in their path, making so much look tired and old fashioned. Like Elvis before them, they played exciting music, and like Elvis, much of it was covers of black originals or black influenced.*

*The Beatles story to come next month.*

## WHO IS A GRAMMY NOMINEE?

Huge congratulations to Russ for this nomination for composer of Since You Been Gone, as used in the Guardians Of The Galaxy, in the section, "**Best Compilation Soundtrack for Visual Media**".



In case you haven't seen it yet, this is how the song was used in one of the trailers for the film. <https://youtu.be/KZOZyM66xyg?si=hkRBHY5zMnJB2hHV>

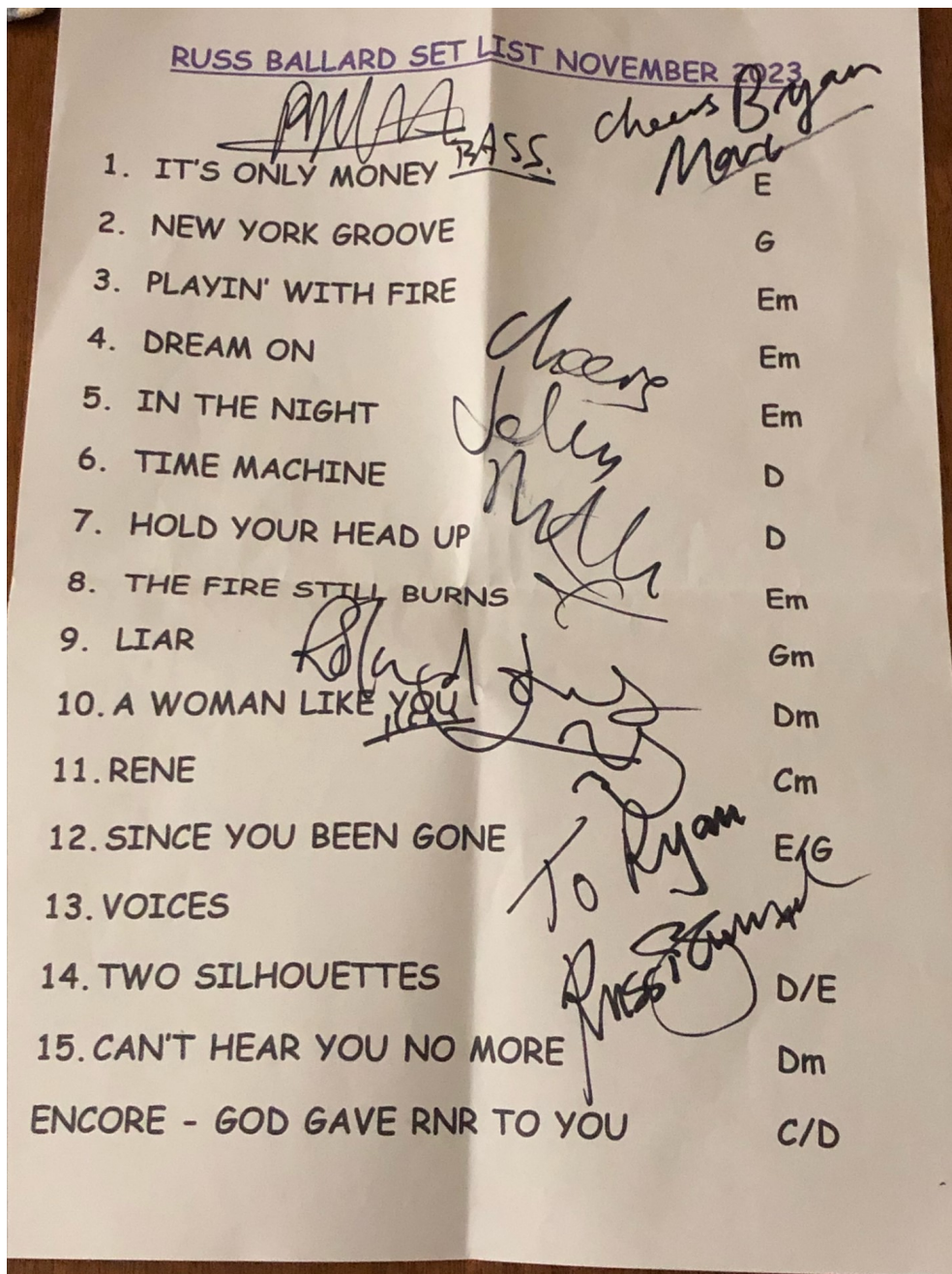
## UK TOUR

Russ has completed his 2023 UK tour. There are lots of wonderful comments on the Facebook page from people who were lucky enough to go to a gig. I know there were people who went to two or even three!

Our newsletter friend, Ryan Nagy went to Nell's and said this....

It was a great evening! Nice venue, the band sounded great and the setlist was excellent. Russ was very gracious and took time to sign everything I brought, plus the setlist I was given there. He also took photos with me and the other people who were waiting after. I know sometimes it can be disappointing to meet your musical heroes, but I'm happy to say meeting Russ couldn't have been nicer.





For this tour, Russ added It's Only Money as an opener. This tour was the first time since Argent that Russ has performed this song. Ian captured this video at the soundcheck for the first gig at the Beaverwood, Chislehurst.

<https://youtu.be/w1IJm40W15Y?si=7JI9v5e6FB7cnPcp>

And here is Hold Your Head Up at the HRH Prog festival in Great Yarmouth on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November. A big audience here.

<https://youtu.be/hXO3n-PWfi0?si=qPI-kGUwXGv9kaT0>

A great review from a local Devizes site.

<https://devizine.com/2023/11/20/review-russ-ballard-long-street-blues-club-con-club-devizes-saturday-18th-november-2023/>

Les Lynyard sent me some wonderful photos he took at The Beaverwood show but the file was too big to attach to this email. However this link will take you to Les's Facebook, where you can see them. [https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=10161151605639321&id=741099320](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10161151605639321&id=741099320)

There will be another brilliant review next month.

## COMING UP

Good news for Portugal!



(Poster thanks to our Sven)

The tickets for the Portugal gigs sell out quickly. If you would like to go, don't leave it until the last minute. The Casino is an excellent venue and Russ plays to a crowd of 2/3000 there.

## EXHIBITION

Bob Henrit has had a lot to do with the setting up of this exhibition at the Lowewood Museum in Broxbourne, Herts, UK. It covers the time Russ has been writing about in his autobiography for the newsletter and is about the music scene in his and Bob's area at that time. Russ has also been involved in this. The exhibition goes on until June 2024 so there is plenty of time to see it. There will be some special performance days and workshop days.



Find out about the early days of skiffle music  
Explore the local groups and musicians who started their careers in the boys clubs in the borough  
Listen to musician's memories  
Have a go at playing a skiffle instrument

# Borough Beats

AN EXHIBITION CELEBRATING ALL THINGS

## ★ ROCK N ROLL ★

*in the Borough of Broxbourne 1950s – 1970s*

AT LOWEWOOD MUSEUM

**Saturday 4 November 2023 – Saturday 1 June 2024**  
(museum will be closed over Christmas period – Friday 22 December – Friday 12 January)

**SPECIAL MUSIC EVENTS TAKING PLACE DURING THE EXHIBITION**  
**FIND OUT MORE VISIT [WWW.LOWEWOODMUSEUM.COM](http://WWW.LOWEWOODMUSEUM.COM)**

Lowewood Museum  
Exhibition is on the ground floor



Ian and Sven talked to Bob recently about the exhibition in a podcast. You can listen to the podcast via Russ's website here <https://l.facebook.com/l.php?> or anywhere else you usually listen to podcasts.

## MERCH

If you are looking for a Christmas present for a Russ fan, I still have a few signed "Live" CDs at £10 and some signed lyric sheets for £5 each. Email me here if you would like more details.

## LYRIC OF THE MONTH

This one has to be for Roland! That might have given some of you a clue. Which song?

**You were here in my arms**

**Ooh, how we loved, babe, every night**

**I turn around and you take flight**

**I swore I'd never fall in love again**

**No way, I couldn't take the pain**

Scroll down to the end of the newsletter to see the answer and hear the track.

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

From Brian Barry

This newly released gem arrived today. I was knocked out to read the opening paragraph in the excellent booklet that was included. So...more details needed from Russ about his and Bob's involvement in this PLEASE!! Such a great band Honeybus were.

Brian





**Russ:** Honeybus...Pete Dello - Ray Kane and Pete Kircher (drums).

*I remember we (The Roulettes) and Unit 4 had the same publisher....Apollo Music - We spent a lot of time there....rehearsing and writing. The first single that made a mark from Honeybus... "Do I Still Figure in Your Life", which Pete Dello wrote . Beautiful - also recorded by Joe Cocker. The second single was a hit. "I Can't Let Maggie Go". It was used in a bread advert , (Nimble, I think)and became a hit.*

*Pete felt the pressure of the attention (allegedly), also the bigger work load, so was advised to rest. The group was offered a slot on The Gene Pitney /Status Quo tour. Although Pete was unavailable, the group wanted one guest spot that was offered (I think in Birmingham). Because Pete Dello couldn't perform, they asked if I would play lead guitar...which I did.*

*Pete continued writing and wrote another song which had a lot of attention..."I'm A Gambler ". He chose to record this song with another group, "Lace". Pete asked me to overdub accordion. I remember the recording getting plenty of plays on radio...A year later Bob Henrit and I were in 'Argent' With Rod and Jim Rodford.*

## **DAVE'S COVER QUEST**

A bit of self-indulgence this month.

**No.63**



### **Prove It by Rare Earth**

Rare Earth began life in Detroit, Michigan as The Sunliners in the 1960s. They soon established themselves as one of the hottest live acts in the area. Twin

brothers Russ and Ralph Terrana decided to leave the band, as Russ had gained a degree in electronic engineering and wanted to use make use of his skills. He was snapped up by Motown Records at the age of 23 and went on to engineer and mix scores of hit records for artists such as **Jackson Five** and **Stevie Wonder** over an 18-year period. His twin Ralph, meanwhile, set up his own recording studio Tera Shirma, in Detroit, which produced many hits, including many Motown associates. In fact, a few members of Motown's studio house band the **Funk Brothers**, moonlighted on recordings for other artists at Tera Shirma, being very careful to avoid being discovered by Motown boss **Berry Gordy Jr.**

Kenny James (Organ, piano) and Rod Richards (guitar) were the respective replacements for Ralph and Russ. Changing their name to the more fashionable Rare Earth, they were signed up by Motown Records, one of the first white artists to join the label. Gordy Jr was already looking to expand his Motown empire by introducing a rock music subsidiary, and when he couldn't decide on a name for the new label, one of the band cheekily suggested "Why not call it Rare Earth?". To everyone's surprise he agreed, and one of their first signings was **Meatloaf**, who performed with a female partner as the duo **Stoney and Meatloaf**.

Rare Earth faced a lot of competition for booking Motown studio time. Gordy Jr had previously worked on the production line at Ford Motors, and he set about running his record label in the same way. They had writers working in two rooms, each with a piano, including **Smokey Robinson, Holland, Dozier and Holland**, and Norman Whitfield and Barrett Strong to name just a few. They had their own studio band, the **Funk Brothers**, featuring the legendary James Jamerson on bass, 13 musicians cramped into the "snake pit" a.k.a. Studio A at 2648 West Grand Blvd. Detroit. As any factory would, they had a Quality Control Department, where at the end of each week designated staff would assemble to listen to proposed single releases and place their vote on whether a song would likely be a hit or a miss. If the overall vote was a miss, the record would not get a release and would finish up in the Motown Vaults, many of these only now coming to light on "rare recordings" CDs. I think I'm right in saying that the review panel would often include a couple of random members of the public invited from the streets.

**Rare Earth** usually worked in the studio in the early hours of the morning. Being gigging musicians, they would play a club at night then head into Motown studios to record. Their first release was a cover version of the Smokey Robinson song Get Ready, previously a Motown hit for **The Temptations**. Rare Earth's

strength was their ability to jam, and their version of the Motown classic could easily last 20 or 30 minutes. Their debut album featured a whole side version of Get Ready from which an edited version was released as a single. Being a Motown collector in the early 1970s, I discovered this single in a bargain bin in Ireland whilst on holiday. Having never heard of Rare Earth, I was curious. It turned out to be one of my best buys. Rare Earth soon became one of my two favourite bands, the other being **Argent** of course. **Get Ready** was a huge hit in America as were the releases that followed; **(I Know) I'm Losing You**, **I Just Want to Celebrate**, **Hey Big Brother** and **Born to Wander**. Unfortunately, Motown hadn't got a clue as to how to promote and market them. They'd never handled an act capable of writing and playing without using the in-house writers and session players.

With the first two hits under their belt, another line-up change saw the two new boys replaced by **Ray Monette** (guitar) and **Mark Olson** (keyboards). The band became even stronger as a result, and more hits followed. Unfortunately, internal disagreements over management broke out, driving a wedge between founder members Peter Rivera (drums) and Gil Bridges (sax). Rivera, responsible for most of the lead vocals, and considered by most to be the leader, left the group, and a bitter legal battle followed, including who had the rights to the name.

I continued to follow the band after Rivera's departure. They still had one of my favourite guitarists of all time in Ray Monette. Ray was actually a one-time Funk Brother and played on many, if not most, of the early 1970s Motown hits, as well as many of the Tera Shirma studio recordings, such as Band of Gold (Freda Payne) and Give Me Just a Little More Time (Chairmen of the Board).

After 1980, Gil Bridges and Ray Monette steered **Rare Earth** through several line-up changes, until Ray eventually left to rejoin **The Funk Brothers**, who were in the limelight thanks to the documentary film **Standing in the Shadows of Motown** and went out on tour. Ray was replaced by a new guitarist called Ivan Greilich, and to everyone's surprise a new CD was announced, their first for many years. Whilst a far cry from their hit-filled days with Peter Rivera, **Brand New World** is a decent collection of songs, notable for the inclusion of two **Russ Ballard** covers. Everybody knows the first, which is **Dancer**, a song taken from Russ's **At the Third Stroke** album. The other one will be new to most ears, a song called **Prove It**.

Gil Bridges passed away in 2021 following complications from covid-19, and Ray Monette retired due to ill health. Today, a new look Rare Earth has emerged with

no original members. Peter Rivera continues to write, record and tour under his own name. In their day, Rare Earth recorded a dozen albums with Motown, the early releases achieving gold and platinum awards. Few bands can boast that they played in front of 250,000 people as they did when they were the opening act at the legendary **California Jam** in 1974. They never got to play in the UK. In fact, in all those years I only ever managed to find one photograph of the band playing live and that was a tiny black and white photo in Sounds music paper. As you can imagine, It's been a big thrill for me to be able to watch film footage of the band in their prime on You Tube.

I can't find a link to the song **Prove It**, the subject of this article, but we do have the other song **Dancer** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2S9g\\_BmUco](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2S9g_BmUco)



### [Rare Earth - Dancer](#)

from the Album "A Brand New World" Rare Earth  
Vinyls and over 6.000 more Vinyls & CD's see  
here: <https://www.hood.de/gesamt-sortiment/963173/superboeller.htm>  
[www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

In addition, here's a couple of early 1970s clips that will give you a flavour of the band before the arguments broke out.

Breaking into an instrumental jam on the live version of their debut hit Get Ready <https://classic.motown.com/video/rare-earth-get-ready/>

Live at the California Jam 1974 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wne6z05rWH4>

Finally, former drummer / vocalist Peter Rivera talks about those early days at Motown. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acU3Tls2iD0>

## **LYRIC OF THE MONTH - ANSWER**

From the wonderful Barnet Dogs album it is "It's Too Late".

This video is from the last time Russ played in Portugal. Look at that crowd!

[https://youtu.be/3tpbaohPzlw?si=Hcl3EvzzdFpNKi\\_c](https://youtu.be/3tpbaohPzlw?si=Hcl3EvzzdFpNKi_c)