



(Header by Sven)

May 2024

A big welcome to our new readers.

The Rock meets Classic tour was a huge success. You should have received an email with the second part of Ian's tour diary. If you haven't looked at it, it has already been on Russ's Facebook page so, if you read it there you don't need the email.

The show in Oberhausen was popular with our readers, including our newsletter friend, Markus Linten, who has sent us his review of the show.

Russ followed this amazing tour with a sold out gig in Estoril, Portugal, brilliantly organised, as always, by his friend Emanuel. Emanuel has done a few shows for Russ in recent years. You can see details on Russ's website, (created and looked after by Sven), in the On Stage section. <https://russballardmusic.com/stage>. Ian has again done a gig diary so everyone can feel like they were there. Again, this is the same as the post that has been on Russ's Facebook page.

Sue

THIS MONTH - RUSS'S DIARY

Hi Everyone - You might know, on the 7th April, I joined a tour called 'Rock meets Classic' - It's a concept that's become very popular in Germany, where members of well known groups join an orchestra of strings, Violins, Cellos, Basses...Brass, Woodwind....Very much what we would see and hear playing Beethoven and Mozart. What we do not normally see is a rock group as part of the orchestra. The rock players are there to provide the beat, rhythm and rock power....The orchestra is there to add a classical edge to the rock songsAnd what a lot of fun it was!

7th April - Wurzburg, Germany - *I flew with my good friend Ian Street to Wurzburg. I knew I'd be away for two weeks and I needed someone to be my tour manager.*

Checked into hotel - met up with my good friend and fellow Artist, Robert Hart. Robert and I have been friends for many years, and we have been looking forward to doing this tour together.

Took a taxi to the rehearsal hall to meet members of the Orchestra and listen to song arrangements, then doing a sound check, finally singing my songs. The power an Orchestra gives to songs in a live situation is energising ...A very moving experience. Robert, Ian and I are driven back to our hotel. We decide to hunt for an Indian restaurant. After twenty minutes of walking, we find one... Good food, good sleep.

8th April - Wurzburg *At breakfast I meet some more Artists, John and Jesse from Supertramp - ten minutes later Midge Ure sits at the table and we talk music....After breakfast...Robert, Ian and I take a walk in to town.*

9th April - Wurzburg *Final rehearsals....Everything sounds strong.*

10th April - Ludwigsburg *We leave Wurzburg 11.00am in our Nightliner Coach, a very impressive vehicle, which is carrying all the artists, the Orchestra's rock group and choir of six, and we drive to Ludwigsburg for the first show. Arrive venue 15.00h - Soundcheck 15.45h - Showtime - 20.00h - Dinner 18.00h - Shuttle to hotel, 23;00h... [3,500 very enthusiastic people, show went well....This is fun]*

11th April - Kempten *As you can imagine, touring has to be a disciplined process to work well, and RmC has been extremely disciplined, so...Everything appeared to work perfectly, however, 'UP' at 7 - breakfast at 8 - bus at 10 - venue at 3, soundcheck at 16.00h - showtime 20.00h etc.....etc.....Can seem a little like*

groundhog day....So, from here I'll give you the other Cities played and some good moments lived....

12th April - Passau - 13th Regensburg - 14th Munich - Oberhausen - Ingolstadt - Frankfurt - Nürnberg - Würzburg...

I must say, the vibes on the tour were amazing, everybody appeared on best form - The only problem was there wasn't enough time to make friends with everyone. I found my favourite place on the bus was at the back, which appeared to be the same for Robert, Midge, Ian and Tarja - [I'll tell you about her in a moment] - after a day or two, Paul Shortino decided it was the place to be. Paul is from America and singer with 'Quiet Riot' - an extrovert man and performer but had another side to his personality...a gentle, loving side, and he was interested in some might say, 'the higher qualities of the mind' so, I felt we hit it off really well....Paul's rock voice sounded amazing and then I heard some of his slower, sadder songs and his softer voice is great too.....Let me tell you about Tarja. She was born in Finland and was lead singer in a group called 'Nightwish'. She left Nightwish some time time ago and still has a good following. I talked to Tarja on the bus for quite some time and found her easy talk to, intelligent and funny. On stage she is a great performer and has a tremendous voice, which is very Rock meets Classic. The choir and group occasionally came to the back of the bus for a chat about all things happening in their lives and us in ours. We became good friends, James [guitar] - Keys & arranger - Lisa [thanks for everything] - Alessandro [Singer, thanks for helping me out] - Ralph [Drums] - AJ [bass] - Alex [guitar] - Tomas [Guitar] - Mario [Conductor...thanks for keeping my timing together] - Sarah, Gabby, Peter and Al [Singers, you were amazing.....]

Oh well there was also lots of fun with my dear friend Robert Hart , thanks for your energy.....and to my good friend and tour manager extraordinaire Ian

Street.....LIVE DREAMS - YEAH! - LET'S DO IT AGAIN 🤪😄

I will write about the gig in Estoril, Portugal next month.

RUSS - LIFE STORIES

Hello all - This is the RB Newsletter from September 1963 - "SEE YOU IN THE CHARTS"

It was always strange trying to get back to normal life after working regularly in shows. "Summer seasons", one nighters or tours - it's always as if the body and the mind get used to waking up to start working from 6pm instead of winding down, as in a normal job. However, we didn't stay "normal" for long... "The First Time" became a big hit, reaching number three in the charts and we were working hard doing TV shows. There were children's shows, "Five O'clock Club" and "Crackerjack" and music shows like "Ready Steady Go" and "Thank Your Lucky Stars". Also variety shows like "The Billy Cotton Band Show" and "Sunday Night At The Prince Of Wales". Those days of hit records were new and exciting to me. On TV then we only had two channels, BBC and ITV, both were black and white but audience figures were amazing - if we appeared on a children's TV show, it seemed every schoolboy and schoolgirl saw the show. As I walked along the street, boys and girls would speak to me. I did quite like that. I was easily identifiable because of the dark glasses I constantly wore. Sometimes they would ask for an autograph and occasionally I would be brought down to Earth when someone would ask what I did for a real job when I wasn't in the group. People would sometimes ask, "why do you always wear sunglasses? Is it a gimmick?" There were so many comments like that and they always gave me a feeling of deflation...it was just like a cloud coming down over me - I always gave the same answer.... "I'm blind in one eye". That seemed to satisfy the enquiries.

Because The Roulettes were getting so much exposure, it was considered a good idea for the group to make a record without Adam. It didn't take Chris Andrews long to come up with a song called, "Soon You'll Be Leaving Me" with "Tell Tale Tit" as the B-side. We recorded the songs at Abbey Road's number three studio, with John Burgess producing.

To be continued.... I'll tell you what developed in next month's RB News.... Have a great May - Lots of Love - Russ.

COMING UP - HALLE, GERMANY

So Russ hasn't finished yet. He has another gig coming up on 8th June in Halle, Germany. I have told you about this already a couple of times so this is just a reminder. The event marks the end of the week long Handel Festival in Halle. This is, once again, with an orchestra and is billed as Symphonic-Rock-Concert, "Bridges to Classics" and Firework display.

From the festival programme..."Traditionally, thousands of visitors stream to the Galgenberg Gorge in Halle on the final festival weekend. In Bridges to Classics they witness a fascinating bridging of the gap between classical Baroque music and modern rock. This "symphonic rock concert" takes place against the breathtaking and atmospheric natural decor of the Gallenberg Gorge in Halle and closes with a firework display." <https://haendelhaus.de/hfs/bridges-classics-mit-feuerwerk>



Markus is very good at getting radio play for Russ in Germany. In preparation for Halle, he sent me this...

Hello Sue,

A good day today for Russ and a good support for his gig in Halle. Today and tomorrow MDR Sachsen-Anhalt plays songs only from the 80ies. My request was "The fire still burns" – and I had luck. I know the presenter likes Russ' songs very much and so he told on radio that 'Russ Ballard – responsible for songs like Frida's "I know there ..." is gonna be the star at the Handel-Festival in Halle ... '

Listen to his words after the song (LP version) was played 😊. (See attachment)

Sunny greetings from the Rheinland
Markus

FAKE FACEBOOK PROFILES/PAGES

On Russ's Facebook page we recently had a fake page interacting with comments on posts. They used photos from Russ's official Facebook page and shared posts from there. They were reported and, thankfully, they didn't stick around long. There has also been a similar fake Rod Argent profile doing the same thing. Also, there has been a personal profile in Russ's name in existence for some time. The name of the profile is Russ Ballard and you have to look carefully to see that it is a "fan profile". Russ doesn't use a personal profile so please don't interact. The only place Russ is on Facebook, or any social media, himself is the official Russ Ballard page looked after by Carole. If you look for Russ in search, that fan profile will come up. The real one has the logo as its profile photo. If you need to tag Russ, it needs to be the official page or it won't be seen.

ROCK MEETS CLASSIC - GERMANY

From Markus Linten

Firstly, I feel a little sorry for all those who weren't able to experience a Rock meets Classic show in Germany in April. The concerts were phenomenal, and we were guests in Oberhausen on 16 April: one of best concerts I've witnessed in my life! The reasons for this are obvious: a great orchestra with outstanding musicians and singers, a dedicated orchestra leader, a brilliant sound, an impressive setlist and of course the stars of the evening, which in my opinion included Russ, Tarja Turunen, former singer of Nightwish (she had the most fans in the hall) and Robert Hart with his crazy voice. By the way: all participants are well known in Germany, especially Supertramp, Midge Ure's Ultravox, Manfred Mann's Earth Band and (for the younger 😊) Nightwish.

The combination of orchestra (about 40 people) and rock band worked very well - especially with rock classics like "School" by Supertramp or "The fire still burns".

Russ should have played „Hold your Head up“ and „New York Groove“, a journalist from Würzburg wrote - but I think the choice of songs was perfect! Russ's "You can do Magic" with orchestra sent shivers down my spine.

If you can make it, you should definitely attend Russ' performance at the Handel Festival in Halle on 8 June. The motto then is "Bridges to Classic".

Here are my favourite videos from the RmC concerts: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22oQMIWGuIU> (Since you have been gone) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4ar6rLyeaQ> (Fire still burns with a crazy guitar solo by Russ)!

And for all those that love musicals: Tarja Turunen performed „The Phantom of the Opera“ – look for her performance on YouTube.

Markus Linten; Hennef/Germany

ESTORIL, PORTUGAL

Ian's Diary

“Mr. Ballard, I’ve been expecting you.....”

Russ’s gigs at Estoril, Lisbon are always special. This is the third time he has played there and I have been fortunate enough to have been there for all three.

The venue is a Casino but this is no ordinary Casino....it’s actually where the James Bond author Ian Fleming gained the inspiration for not only the book “Casino Royale” but with the idea of creating the James Bond character itself. He was stationed in the area

during World War 2 in his capacity as a British Naval Intelligence Officer.

Inside the venue, the place is simply stunning.

Thursday 9th May

The weather is unbelievable .

Russ and the boys are landing in Lisbon this evening, and then being hosted for dinner by Emanuel Djaor, the Portuguese promoter (going straight there from the airport).

Let me tell you about Emanuel (as told by Russ). He approached Russ via social media some years ago offering to give him the best concert he’s ever done. He put Russ on in Lisbon as part of the “Book of Love” tour with Gun as support. It was amazing and a total success of course.

Since then, he’s hosted Russ at Casino Estoril three times now ...all sell outs.

Emanuel has become a great friend not only to Russ but to all of us at Team RGB and he’s a top man.

Friday 10th May (day of the show)

Russ calls me at 8am to say hello and requests some IT help to ensure his phone can be charged (turns out a socket in his room wasn't working). Upon leaving his room (room????...its a suite....naturally), I say good morning to the Holey Guitar which has been treated

to a string change for the trip 🤖👉.

We go downstairs for breakfast and get Russ an espresso (I think the red wine was flowing last night). Roly Jones then appears and it's great to see him again. His T Shirt is the name of a song he penned which is number 2 in the metal charts called "Hitman"

by Leader of Down.

Have a listen here-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rmwjy0B6Ap4>

Russ's excellent drummer John Miller joins us followed by Marc Rapson, the keyboard wizard. Both are in shorts and in fine form.

I wonder where "lovely Boy" PJ the Bass player is.....the answer is maximising his



. It's not long before he joins

us.

It's brilliant to see all the boys again and it's clear Emanuel's hospitality was exceptional last night.... 🤖🍷🍷🍷

The boys have been invited to lunch at the amazing in house Chinese Restaurant within the Casino and that's at 12.30 so they have the morning free.

Check it out here-

<https://casino-estoril.pt/.../restaurant.../estoril-mandarim>

Russ considers some shut eye but he takes up our offer of a walk along the coast to Cascais. Roland Herzog aka "The Duke" joins us and brings Swiss chocolate.



We are all invited to the Chinese by Russ who offers to pay for us and Emanuel agrees he can pay, but only in 20 years time.

We bump into Emanuel on the way out, he's totally focused on making sure the gig comes together and has only had three hours sleep. He watched Russ's dancing with Robert Hart on the Rock Meets Classic blog and was impressed. Apparently.



The bus is due to leave for soundcheck at 4.45 and so again it's well deserved chill time for our musicians.

We arrive at the venue and there are some fans waiting to see Russ. Two of them have driven from Madrid especially to see Russ (thanks guys) and he spends some time with them. They ask why Russ hasn't played Spain before.....he would love to! I chat with Tomas

Diez Guerra.... nice chap, we get on well, swap numbers and promise to keep in touch to try and make some gigs happen in Spain. He takes a number of Russ's cards to spread the word.

Upon entering the venue the dressing rooms are great and a light buffet is already on offer and draft beer



oh, white and red wine too.....after the show boys!!

I watch the soundcheck from the stage and I'm once again in awe at this amazing venue. Russ and the band sound fantastic but still spend some time double checking their sound.

Back in the dressing room Russ is chatting with Brian Spence and his wife, Debbie. I spot Brian having a noodle on the Holey guitar. We tell him it's not for sale.



Sound check is done and it's only 6.30....we are on at 10pm....so Russ and Roly choose to go back to the hotel and chill. Away from the temptation of the buffet and beer....

We are picked up at 9.15, 45 mins to showtime.

Russ gets changed and spends time warming up his voice. He can't leave the guitar alone and is already noodling.

John is already hitting his lap with his sticks to warm up, Roly has changed into a spangly number with a Kiss, Gene Simmons T. Shirt underneath, PJ looks cool in his colourful skull



T.Shirt and Marc takes his flip flops off for the first time today to reveal his stage footwear of choice.....Converse naturally.



It's 10pm....show time.....I have again been asked by Russ to introduce him in stage 🗣️

so I am fortunate enough to follow the guys up the stairs to the stage. PJ jokes that perhaps I can do 15 mins stand up comedy before they go on..... The background music fades and I walk on and place Russ's towel and set list to the side of his foot pedals. I have chosen to change the intro to include a mention of Russ's Grammy nomination in 2024 and I also try to emulate the excellent Peter Muller who introduced Russ on Rock Meets Classic....."Russ Balllllllaaaarrrddddd" 😊 The band walk on and launch into a blistering "It's Only Money" before proceeding immediately to "New York Groove"...the crowd are up for this.....what an audience.

I join my wife Karen in the audience and feel the love for Russ. They are singing every word.

This is probably the best performance by Russ I have seen....absolutely outstanding...the audience agree and by the time they finish with "It's Too Late" it's nearly midnight and time for the band to enjoy a glass or two and some food.

We give Russ some space, it was hot tonight and he's sitting down with a hot towel around him. A lovely vegan curry arrives for him so he can regain some energy.

John Miller and I had been having a conversation earlier in the day about the great Carl Palmer and some memorabilia I saw for sale in the form of a used drum head and drumsticks, all signed. He gifts me his used drumsticks from the evening and I get him to

sign them. Thanks John.....🙏

Myself, PJ and Marc loiter around the buffet....namely Chicken Piri Piri,

Mushroom Pie and Pastel De Natas.....🍗🥘

We decide all good things must come to an end and time to ask the driver to drop everyone back at the hotel....we spend some time getting a great group photo with some of the guys who made it all happen.....then it's home to bed.

The Holey guitar gets to sleep in

our room to save Russ carrying it but I've promised to give it back in the morning



Saturday 11th May

Time to head home.

Marc leaves at 7am as his son Ted is playing in a cup final tomorrow and he's the coach (good luck guys).

STOP PRESS....the Bengoe Tigers U10s win 4-1. Congratulations lads 🏆🏆🏆

The bus leaves again for the airport at 10am to take Russ, PJ, John and Roly to Lisbon airport.

Russ is hoping to get home for an Italian meal with his family tonight.

We have a 2pm train from Lisbon to Loule.....

That's it for now although Halle in Germany is just over three weeks away.....the Blog will return!

Thanks for reading and thanks to Russ, Emanuel Djaor and the RB band...what a team.

You can watch the opening song, It's Only Money here.

<https://youtu.be/LxvH2Qsxl28?si=0zMDI2t6ao7mBVn9>

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

An old RGB Chestnut this month, written during his days in Argent, but passed over to Colin Blunstone, who had a big hit with it. Many artists have since covered

it. This one is from another Englishman who grew up in Canada.

No.69



I Don't Believe in Miracles by C. B. Victoria

Singer C. B. Victoria, born Edwin Coppard, originated from Kingston-upon-Thames, England, and moved to Canada as a child, where he attended High School in Vancouver.

His musical career began in 1965, as a member of The Deacons, which evolved into The Hollywood Shockers, later shortened to The Shocker. By 1968, he was in a band called Penny Whistle, then two years later formed Trilogy. His first success came in 1975, when he reached No.19 in Toronto CHUM charts with a song called Come and See My Man. The following year, he released his version of Russ Ballard's I Don't Believe in Miracles, taken from his album Dawning Day. It was a Top 20 hit on most radio stations across Canada. His singing voice was renowned for sounding very similar to that of Elton John.

It appears that C B Victoria issued no further recordings after this success. Instead, he went on to become a highly respected inspirational vocal coach, a role he was still carrying out when he suddenly passed away in Japan on 11th May 2019.

Here is a link to the recording. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyHTdRHaGPc>