



(Header by Sven)

## August 2024

A big welcome to all our new readers.

A big thank you to Rainer and Markus for sending us their pieces from Germany after Russ's brilliant performances there this year. I have had to put a couple of things in as attachments because they wouldn't go into the body of the email. Rainer has send a photo of the article he is referring to and has kindly translated the bits we are really interested in. Thank you also to Michele and, of course, our own Dave for their contributions.

Sue

## THIS MONTH - RUSS'S DIARY

*Since my sojourn playing shows in Germany (Rock meets Classic, The Handel Festival) & The Casino in Estoril in Portugal, I'm back to writing in my studio and I believe I have some great new songs. For the last month it's been - My getting up early, studio - 1.00. pm lunch, - run 3.00.pm. - 4.pm back in studio...To some it might seem like a illness 😂 but it's well-being for me.*

*Then this time of the month Sue will say - time for the diary.....*

*Lots of Love,*

*Russ*

## **RUSS - LIFE STORIES**

*Hi there Friends - I ended last month's biog telling you of our dilemma. [ 'our' being The Roulettes] We'd been backing Adam for two years, working solidly and earning well. The problem was, he was taking more time off from gigs and concerts, we were not needed so much. OK, he could afford not to work but we couldn't. Sometimes he would take three or four weeks off. I started to play more and more piano at home and composing songs. We had an old piano in the house. It never seemed to be in tune, but it's sound had atmosphere. I knew that I was neglecting the guitar....two years before, I was practising three hours a day, as soon as I became a 'pro' musician, the songs we played with Tel were so simple it seemed I didn't need to practice. However, I loved playing the piano and I played two to four hours a day whenever I was home.*

*Evie told us she'd contracted us to play a few weeks in Cabaret clubs in the north of England. I didn't like the sound of cabaret, although people told us the money was good, cabaret sounded like a musicians graveyard - where they went when they were no longer creative. Also, we were expected to perform more sophisticated tunes along with Tel's hits. We added a couple of smooth songs, like "Alright OK You Win" and "Let There Be Love", the Nat King Cole, George Shearing hit, which I enjoyed, because it allowed me to put down the guitar and play the piano. Cabaret seemed old people's entertainment and a long way from Rock, the music that I loved. We played for a week in Newcastle, at a club called 'LA DOLCE VITA'. A very good place that had the most well known artists headlining there. Also "MR. SMITHS" in Manchester, which was another prestigious club. I loved playing in Manchester. I thought then, it was as exciting as playing in London.*

## **CDs FOR SALE**

Don't get too excited. This is not new music....yet. Many of you have bought the excellent CD of The Book Of Love Tour live, recorded in 2007 but still totally relevant today. If you have attended any of Russ's shows, this will keep it alive for you. Another 100 copies were made to sell during the Rock Meets Classic tour before the decision was made not to have merch. So now we are selling the RmC version of this CD. Please note that this is the same CD that has been sold previously. It is only the packaging that is new. This is the only live CD that Russ has made.



The CDs would have sold at the shows in Germany for 15 euros. We are selling them now for £12 plus p&p. The CDs are in Germany and will be shipped from there with the appropriate shipping costs.

If you would like to order, please email me at [russ.b.news@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:russ.b.news@hotmail.co.uk) with your name and address and I will give you shipping costs and payment details. Payment is by Paypal only.

Shipping will start in September.

## VOICES OF RUSS BALLARD PODCAST

As Sven, who is a very busy man, has had to take a break from the podcasts for a while, here is the latest podcast from Ian. Russ shared the stage in the Rock meets Classic tour with several others including legendary rock musician, Paul Shortino. During the tour Russ and Paul became great friends. Here is part 1 of Ian's chat with Paul. You can find it on Russ's website here <https://russballardmusic.com/podcast> or any of the places where you usually listen to podcasts.



## ROCK MEETS CLASSIC

To round off the news from the very successful Rock Meets Classic, our friend, Rainer, sent me this email. See the attachment.

Dear Sue,  
Thank you for the latest news.

Please find attached a report from the June/July issue of the German music magazine "Good Times" on the Rock Meets Classic performance in Nuremberg. Here is the translation of the passages that refer to Russ' performance:

***The "Very Special Guest" Russ Ballard demonstrated that he can also deliver all the hits that he had tailored perfectly to the vocal chords of his music colleagues with "You Can Do Magic" (America), "God Gave Rock 'n' Roll To You" (Argent, Kiss) and his own hits "Voices" ("Miami Vice") and "The Fire Still Burns" (as a haunting appeal for peace) - although rock versions of "I Surrender" or "New York Groove" might have caused even more stormy enthusiasm.***

As well as the short report on Tarja Turunen

***“I Walk Alone”, ‘Phantom Of The Opera’ in a duet with Keller and ‘Until My Last Breath’ brought the already exuberant atmosphere to boiling point, which was then reached in the finale with Russ Ballard's original for Rainbow ‘Since You've Been Gone’. Columns of fire once again illuminated the stage action, which had once again provided some magical moments this year. In any case, it was palpable how much everyone involved still burns for their music, true to Ballard's motto “The Fire Still Burns”.***

Best greetings from Germany and have a nice weekend  
Rainer

## **HALLE**

And to round off the Halle news, our friend, Markus, has sent us his video of the tribute to Russ and his songs by the orchestra and singers with a little of Russ himself at the end plus his video of The Fire Still Burns.

Hello Sue,  
here for you and all fans of Russ two videos from the Händelfestival in Halle.  
The quality of it could have been better - but we only caught the seats

(Bierbänke) at the end of the Galgenbergschlucht 🙄.

Best wishes  
Markus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOQ886ZYMBM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3B7cj-GvBA>.

## **RADIO PLAY IN GERMANY**

Also from Markus, who is brilliant at getting radio play for Russ in Germany .....

Hello Sue,  
yesterday evening the Oldieabend presented songs that deal with wandering, walking, hills and mountains - and my request "Where do we go from here" was played! I had this song only at the back of my mind - but it's really great!



Best wishes & sunny weekend  
Markus

The only way I could get this clip from the radio show into the newsletter was by making it an attachment so have a look wherever your attachments appear and give it a click.

## MIAMI VICE

Thank you to Michele Turner who found this video on YouTube. There was some really good music in Miami Vice and it is good (but not surprising!) to see Russ's songs in the top 10 .....

Michele: "This is the first time I've come across the attached video with the top 10 Miami Vice music moments. Russ is at no 9 with 'In the Night' and no 4 with 'Voices' two brilliant songs. Although there are some great songs on the video I did think that 'Voices' should have been the top choice. Great video to watch if you are a Miami Vice fan".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQmba21VeW4>

## FROM DAVE

### Friends and Good Relations

Another month flies by, as the UK heads towards the end of a summer best described as forgettable weatherwise. Unless you happen to be a duck, that is. In my case, July has been particularly wet thanks to a hairline crack in my water mains supply pipe under my garden, which I'm informed by the Water Authority, has been losing water at the rate of 1800 litres of water an hour. Apparently, the water meter I had installed only a couple of months ago, on the advice that it would save me lots of money, has been whizzing round like an Olympics stopwatch, unbeknown to me, as the meter was installed in my absence "somewhere down the road". I think a big water bill will soon be heading my way.

Back on dry land, I don't know if anyone agrees, but the more TV channels that become available, the less there seems to be appealing enough to watch. Now that the Euros and Wimbledon have come and gone, I find myself drawn towards watching content on You Tube; comedy shows from the 1970s, Michael Parkinson shows, old classic football matches played on mud rather than grass, and particularly lots of music related material.

Enter a subject in the search box, and not only will you find a selection of video clips matching your search, but there will be options with related content. I was going through this process a few evenings ago, when a chain of clips led me to Pink Floyd. I've never really paid them much attention. See Emily Play, Another Brick in the Wall, and Money, I can live with quite happily. Comfortably Numb and Wish You Were Here, considered masterpieces by Floyd fans worldwide, less so. However, I do acknowledge their talent as musicians, and find myself being drawn towards the numerous documentaries about the ongoing feud between guitarist Dave Gilmour and bass guitarist Roger Waters. They have really been slating each other across social media platforms, and it doesn't look good seeing two professional musicians airing their grievances so publicly. I find it compelling to try and understand why the two can no longer stand each other. To me, Dave Gilmour seems quite a placid guy, whereas Roger Waters comes across as more opinionated and vocal. There's a very heated live television debate on YouTube between Piers Morgan and Roger Waters, on antisemitism. It gets very heated as Morgan turns the screw, and I kept waiting for the fisticuffs, which thankfully didn't happen.

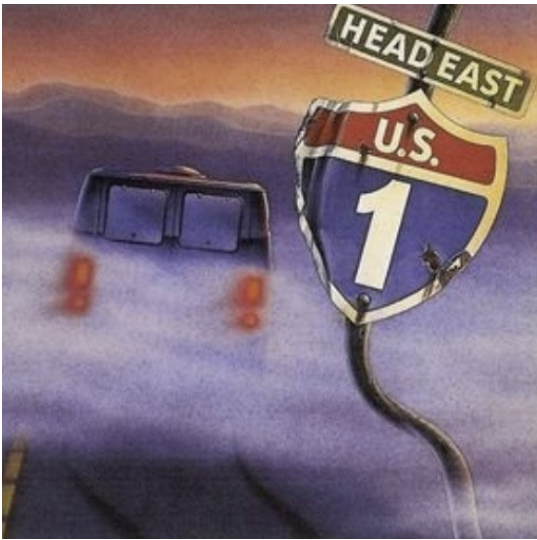
Of course, Pink Floyd aren't the only group to have suffered internal relationship breakdowns. I don't know why I get so fascinated by these break-ups and make-ups, others include Lennon and McCartney, Simon and Garfunkel, Gillan and Blackmore in Deep Purple and not least, the complex situation that existed for years within Fleetwood Mac. Much of it is inevitable when musicians face the cycle of touring for weeks and months, spending more time with each other than they do with their families, whilst having to face the pressure to write and record new music.

Talking of groups, it was nice reading today that Russ Ballard and Rod Argent had a long phone conversation in recent days, with Russ checking up on the health and ongoing recovery of his former band partner. Now that Rod is going to be putting his focus into songwriting and studio work, Colin Blunstone doing more solo work, and Russ continuing to write and record new songs, who knows, maybe there's a possibility of some interesting new music to look forward to. Just for old times' sake, a collaboration would be nice.

## DAVE'S COVER QUEST

**Head East** came to prominence in 1978 when they had a hit in their homeland with Russ Ballard's **Since You Been Gone**. But who knew that they also released a cover version of **I Surrender**?

**No.72**



### **I Surrender by Head East**

Illinois rockers **Head East** formerly known as The TimeAtions, was formed in 1969 by **John Schlitt** (lead vocals), **Danny Piper** (guitar), **Roger Boyd** (keyboards), Larry Boyd (bass), and drummer **Steve Huston**. John, Roger, Steve and Larry were studying at university at the time. Piper left in 1972 followed by Boyd in 1974, Mike Somerville (guitar) and Dan Birney (bass) replacing them during the band's 1970s heyday. Numerous personnel changes followed since the 1980s, with Roger Boyd being the only original member still in the band today.

Head East recorded and produced their first album, **Flat as a Pancake**, in 1974. Issued on their own label, Pyramid Records, all 5,000 records and 500 eight-tracks produced were sold, prompting A&M to sign them, and re-release the album a year later. By 1978 the album had achieved gold status and included two hit singles **Never Been Any Reason** and **Love Me Tonight**.

Two more albums, **Get Yourself Up** (1976) and **Gettin' Lucky** (1977), followed. Neither were as successful as their debut release. In 1978, their fourth album, simply titled **Head East**, presented them with their third hit single, a cover of Russ Ballard's **Since You Been Gone**. Though only reaching No.46 on the Billboard singles chart, it was their highest placing to date. The single also reached No.64 in the Canadian charts. In 1979, the song opened Side Three of their next live double album, **Head East Live!** That same year, another studio album was released, **A Different Kind of Crazy**, made up solely of self-penned songs.

From a charts point of view, the band had started to go backwards, and for their next album, **U.S. 1**, released in 1980, they once again introduced some covers, one being Russ Ballard's **I Surrender**, which also featured as a single. By now, **Dan Odum** had replaced lead vocalist John Schlitt, due to problems with drug dependency. Schlitt would later recover and emerge in 1986 as lead vocalist in Christian rock band **Petra**, who achieved acclaim for their 1977 cover version of



**God Gave Rock and Roll to You**, with lyrics re-written (uncredited) to reflect their religious beliefs.

With the magic not quite working this time, *I Surrender* failed to chart, leaving the much stronger version by **Rainbow** to become the definitive version.

Meanwhile, U.S. 1 was the last Head East album to chart, and was their last recording for A&M. Since that time, numerous personnel changes have occurred, with sporadic album releases on small record labels.

The interesting thing is that **Head East** preceded Rainbow in releasing **Since You Been Gone** and repeated the feat with their release of **I Surrender**, in October 1980, three months before Rainbow's version hit the shops. Sharp-eyed newsletter readers might recall that the British rock group **Praying Mantis** had been scheduled to release the song, but after recording the backing track, the song was taken off them and given to **Rainbow**, as they were a bigger name, causing some bitterness.

**Head East** continues to tour in 2024, with sole original member, Roger Boyd, flying the flag. Former members Mike Somerville and Steve Huston passed away on 28th February 2020 and 25th July 2023 respectively.

Here is a link to Head East's version of Russ Ballard's *I Surrender*: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WgFQDL\\_XHQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WgFQDL_XHQ)



[Head East - I Surrender](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WgFQDL_XHQ)  
[www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WgFQDL_XHQ)

## ROCK MEETS CLASSIC

### Zwischen metallischem Hard Rock und Oper

Nürnberg, Arena Nürnberger Versicherung, 20. April

Die Nürnberger Arena war mit deutlich über 5000 Zuschauern ordentlich gefüllt, die Künstler backstage bereits vor ihren Auftritten bestens gelaunt, und das Publikum schon nach den ersten Tönen voll in Stimmung, als „Rock Meets Classic“ (RmC) auch in diesem Jahr traditionell in der Franken-Metropole Station machte. Und eines fiel aufmerksamen Zuhörern schnell auf: Das Orchester (Dirigent: Mario Gebert) und die von Lisa Müller (keys), der künstlerischen Leiterin der Show, angeführte RmC-Band harmonisierten besser als im Vorjahr, wurden die „Klassiker“ nicht über weite Strecken von den „Rockern“ an die Wand gedrückt. Vielmehr ergänzten sie sich immer wieder und förderten so – nicht nur bei Midge Ure und Tarja Turunen – die Dramaturgie zahlreicher Songs, die einst Rockgeschichte geschrieben hatten.

Es waren zwar nicht immer die Originalsänger der Bands, deren Hits an diesem Abend gefeiert wurden, doch sowohl Paul Shortino als auch vor allem Robert Hart lieferten überzeugende Shows ab. Shortino gab zur Eröffnung nach dem Orchesterintro und „Detroit Rock City“ der RmC-Band

Lizzy-Aushilfsgitarristen verpflichtet hatte, nachdem sich Gary Moore während der Tour verabschiedet hatte. Kein Wunder, dass die ausgelassene Stimmung nicht nur unter seinen Fans im Publikum weiter an Fahrt aufnahm.

Dass er all die Hits, die er der Kollegenschaft passgenau auf die Stimmbänder geschneidert hatte, auch selbst gut rüberbringt, demonstrierte der „Very Special Guest“ Russ Ballard mit „You Can Do Magic“ (America), „God Gave Rock’n’Roll To You“ (Argent, Kiss) und seinen eigenen Hits „Voices“ („Miami

Vice“) und „The Fire Still Burns“ (als eindringlicher Friedensappell) – wobei rockige Versionen von „I Surrender“ oder „New York Groove“ möglicherweise für noch mehr stürmische Begeisterung gesorgt hätten. Da John Helliwell und Jesse Siebenberg (voc, p, g) mit den Supertramp-Dauerbrennern „School“, „Breakfast In America“ mit dem legendären Saxofonso Solo Helliwells, „Give A Little“ und dem „Logical Song“ quasi Selbstläufer mitgebracht hatten, blieb der Stimmungsllevel hoch.



Orchester mit John Helliwell & Jesse Siebenberg (Supertramp)



Midge Ure (Ultravox)



Robert Hart (MMEB)



Paul Shortino (Quiet Riot)



Russ Ballard



Tarja Turunen (Nightwish)

den typisch amerikanischen Entertainer und Showman, auch wenn er ganz zu Beginn den eleganten Gehstock samt silbernem Totenkopfknauf kurzzeitig aus der Hand verlor – die Hüftwackler hingegen saßen perfekt. Mit den Quiet-Riot-Klassikern „Metal Health“ und „Stay With Me Tonight“ – später auch noch „Cum On Feel The Noize“ – sorgte er rund 40 Jahre nach seinem bislang einzigen Nürnberg-Gastspiel mit seiner damaligen Band Rough Cutt für erste Beifallstürme, die noch lauter und intensiver wurden, als Hart die Gassenhauer „Davy’s On The Road Again“ und „Mighty Quinn“ seines aktuellen Arbeitgebers Manfred Mann’s Earth Band kraftvoll intonierte. Wie schon bei Shortino zuvor brauchte es keine große Aufforderung, um das Auditorium zum Mitsingen und -klatschen zu animieren. Im Gegenteil: Hart konnte das Singen der Zuhörerschaft schon beim ersten Refrain von „Mighty Quinn“ überlassen.

Der einstige Ultravox-Anführer Midge Ure wiederum konnte sich bei seinem dritten RmC-Gastspiel auf den vierköpfigen Chor (Sarah Fox, Gabriela Guncikova, Alessandro Del Vecchio und Moderator/Zeremonienmeister Peter Keller) verlassen, wenn es darum ging, die hohen Töne bei „If I Was“, „Vienna“, „Hymn“ und „Dancing With Tears In My Eyes“ zu treffen. Umso beeindruckender waren die Saitenkünste, die der Schotte auch solierend unter Beweis stellte, als er seine Poperfolge in überaus rockigen Versionen anstimmte. Nach diesem Auftritt konnte man problemlos nachvollziehen, warum Phil Lynott ihn 1979 als Thin-

Den trieb dann die frühere Nightwish-Sängerin Tarja Turunen förmlich auf den Gipfel. Gestützt auf das perfekt passende Orchester samt kraftvoller Rockband, changierte die charismatische Sopranistin zwischen Rock und Oper, bot dazu mit ihrer imposanten Bühnenpräsenz auch den Augen der Zuschauenden Attraktives – Tourneeveranstalter Manfred Hertlein dürfte sich im Nachhinein selbst gratuliert haben, die Finnin als Headlinerin verpflichtet zu haben. „I Walk Alone“, „Phantom Of The Opera“ im Duett mit Keller und „Until My Last Breath“ beförderten die ohnehin schon überschäumende Atmosphäre in Richtung Siedepunkt, der dann im Finale aller Akteure mit Russ Ballards Vorlage für Rainbow, „Since You’ve Been Gone“, erreicht wurde. Feuersäulen illuminierten noch einmal das Bühnengeschehen, das auch in diesem Jahr einmal mehr für manche magischen Momente gesorgt hatte. Spürbar wurde in jedem Fall, wie sehr alle Beteiligten getreu Ballards Motto „The Fire Still Burns“ immer noch für ihre Musik brennen.

Für ähnlich stimmungsvolle Momente wie in diesem Jahr will „Rock Meets Classic“ dann auch 2025 wieder sorgen – für die nächstjährige Ausgabe gab Hertlein bereits während der laufenden Tournee die Verpflichtung von Fran Cosmo bekannt, der die Hits präsentieren wird, die er einst mit Boston gespielt hatte.

Text: Philipp Roser, Fotos: Fabian Leibfried