



(Header by Sven)

## November 2024

A big welcome to our new readers...quite a lot this month with several from Germany. We are very happy to have you with us.

After I mentioned, last month, where our readers are from, Liam has pointed out that he is from Northern Ireland so we have a full set of UK countries.

Russ performed at the Rod Argent tribute gig and I know a number of you were there...travelling from Ireland, Portugal and several from the US for the weekend.

Thank you to Rob Spiers for introducing himself. Would anyone else like to?

In September's newsletter I reported on the new Argent live album release, first spotted by Gordon. I know many of you die hard fans bought it. This month Dave has done a review of it. Maybe it would make a good Christmas present..... for yourself. Why not?!

And, we bring you the best news of all!! 🎉🎉🎉

Sue

## **THIS MONTH - RUSS'S DIARY**

What a great atmosphere it was at The E M C on Saturday night. For me it was good seeing many people from my past. After walking into the venue then into the dressing room, the first two people I see are Chris White and Colin B. Within a few minutes, Steve Rodford appeared and joined in our conversation. It wasn't long before Steve and Chris were on stage, sound-checking....Then it was my turn to rehearse with the guys, to make sure we had the arrangements in our heads....A great night, a great audience - The only thing missing was Rod. After speaking together on the phone I know it won't be long before we're hearing more wonderful music from Rod and it will give us the same 'buzz' as the first time we heard 'She's Not There'.

Love,  
Russ x

## **RUSS - LIFE STORIES**

Autobiography - May 1964 - Margate....

Our management [Our being Adam Faith and The Roulettes] had decided we should travel by ship to our Summer season at Margate Winter Gardens, and as we disembarked, we were met by our reception committee, consisting of a brass band, Mums, Dads and hooligans and a Lord Mayor.

We finally made it to the Winter Gardens, a large space with a high stage, a spacious backstage with good dressing rooms. Unfortunately, the venue wasn't great acoustically, however, we were used to playing large venues, so that wasn't a problem. I recall rehearsing over and over, playing our songs quieter and they did sound better.

Once we were into the season our friends arrived - Nic, Mood, Chris Andrews, brother Roy, with wife to be, Jean, and also my dear friend, Norman Jago, with his fiancé, Sylvia. Norman, if you remember, was lead singer in our group three years before.

Because we'd had a few hit records and appeared on TV many times in the last year, some fans decided to spend their holidays in Margate and it was amusing and embarrassing when we'd arrive at the Winter Gardens to have girls screaming just at the fact we were parking the car.

We had regular parties in the bungalow at weekends. We invited the dancers, our friends and relations who happened to be there....also any nice looking fans who happened to come backstage. After the show there were a few parties that did get out of hand, when a bedroom door came off the hinges and fell onto the bed, and the sink came unattached from the wall...also a hole appeared in the bath. My dear friend Nic Kinsey, who was adept at making and repairing anything, took it upon himself to take the pieces and proceed to stick them together. It was a brave attempt to set the sink back onto the wall. We did eventually receive a large bill from the owner for damage to the bungalow.....including one for some new roof tiles due to Mod's escapades, when in one of his 'moments' he decided to play the part of Quasimodo, after climbing onto the roof from one of the bedrooms.

I'll resume the adventures next month - Lots of Love, Russ

## **RECORD DEAL**

So, we have been keeping this news under our hats for some time. I am sure many of you have already seen this, but on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November, Frontiers Music announced that they have signed Russ and they will be putting out a double album of his music early next year. Russ wrote about this music in the September newsletter. There will be one disc of new songs, "Songs From The Warehouse" and one disc with some of his hit songs, "The Hits - Re-Wired". They have been a long time coming, with an unbelievable amount of work by Russ and Christian to get them ready, but not much longer to wait now.

**CONGRATULATIONS**, Russ!

## **ROD ARGENT TRIBUTE SHOW**

For some years now, the Zombies have been enjoying huge success in America. Sadly, a few months ago Rod Argent suffered a small stroke and made the decision to stop touring. He is now recovering well and will continue to play and write. The Zombies had a planned fan weekend in St Albans and the surrounding area for the beginning of November. The Saturday evening was to be a Zombies gig. In Rod's absence, this became a tribute gig for Rod, with several guest performers, including Russ. This took place on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November in Harpenden. Russ performed I Don't Believe In Miracles with Colin Blunstone and God Gave Rock n Roll To You with the band. Thanks to Ian for the videos.

Here is Miracles: <https://youtu.be/Wrzl1Pu8GVQ?si=sh5zbYKMU2FczmgC>  
And God Gave: <https://youtu.be/gvSbRdedKBM?si=jdAMdpZPQhvrMbgh>



## VOICES OF RUSS BALLARD PODCAST

We are just a little behind with the podcasts. Last month we had Paul Shortino Part 2 and now we have Part 3, which was a chat between Paul and Russ. Mostly Paul! :-) They really hit it off during the Rock meets Classic tour and have remained good friends. Watching this, you can see why they get on so well.

<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/russballardmusic/episodes/The-Voices-Of-Russ-Ballard-Podcast--Russ-Ballard--Paul-Shortino-back-together--in-conversation--Episode-33-e2pn36q>

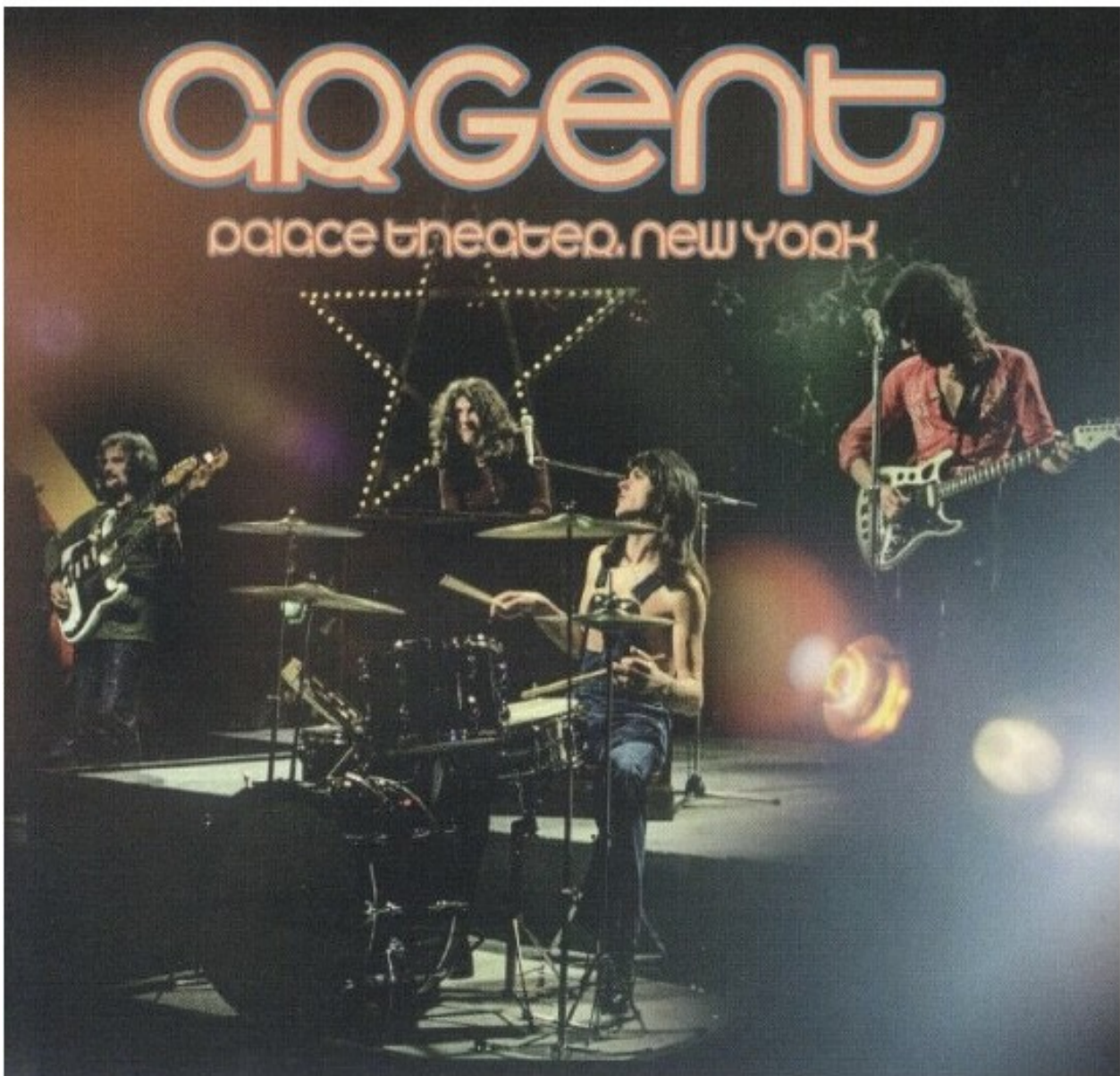


This song is mentioned in the podcast.....Ola and The Janglers..... [https://youtu.be/HrfUegCozs8?si=YOtAM\\_0PSQcDraC2](https://youtu.be/HrfUegCozs8?si=YOtAM_0PSQcDraC2)



## FAIRYTALE IN NEW YORK

An early Christmas present for Argent fans?



### **Argent - Palace Theater, New York (London Calling LCC05158)**

According to the sleeve notes on this new Argent CD release, this 1973 performance was captured at the Palace Theater in New York City shortly after the release of the group's 4th LP **In Deep**. It was broadcast on TV as one of Don Kirchner's Rock Concerts.

The Palace Theater is located in Broadway, Midtown Manhattan, and faces Times Square. It opened in 1913 and at the time, was considered to be a flagship among Vaudeville performers. Over the years it has undergone several renovations, most notably in 1987, when a major upgrade included demolition of part of the original building, re-opening in 1991. As of today, the venue can accommodate around 1650 people.

Film footage already exists of Argent's 1973 performance at the Palace Theater, and although the content and running order doesn't match that of the CD, my attempts at synchronising a couple of songs suggest that the film footage is from the same show that features on this CD. There are a number of other videos featuring individual songs, and one in particular that will appeal to percussion fans, with footage of Bob Henrit giving a drumming masterclass with a solo that stretches beyond 6 minutes. Argent were frequent visitors to America in the early 1970s, so I cannot be sure that all those videos are from the same show, but for those who wish to know, I've set you some homework with the various You Tube links below. With the Americans abbreviating dates differently to the UK, I assume 11-7-73 refers to 7th November rather than 11th July, again more homework for those who have the time and inclination.

As for the musical content, the CD begins part way through 4-part **Pure Love** from the **All Together Now** album, with Rod Argent soloing on his Moog synthesizer. The song segues into **Its Only Money (Part 2)** from **In Deep**, or (Part 1) from **Encore!** This is followed by **Its Only Money (Part 1)** from **In Deep**, or (Part 2) from **Encore!** Confused? Me too. On the latter, Rod again performs an extended jam on his Moog, then his C3 Hammond organ, with Russ reduced to playing backing riffs on his own song, no doubt an example indicative of his eventual decision to move on and do his own thing. That's an observation rather than a criticism, mind. Part of the attraction of listening to Argent is hearing Rod's majestic melodic Hammond solos, particularly in a live situation, which sadly we are unlikely to witness again, at least in the near future.

**God Gave Rock and Roll to You** follows, receiving the usual level of applause, and then Russ moves over to piano to perform **I Don't Believe in Miracles**, the hit song he wrote for **Colin Blunstone**. Rod utilises a Mellotron to provide a nice orchestral string backing, and the vocal harmonies provided by Rod and Jim Rodford fill out the song nicely, reaching a crescendo when Russ hits the high note perfectly at the end.

**(I Am) The Dance of Ages** comes next. It sounds as good as the recorded version on **All Together Now**, Bob Henrit driving the song along with Jim locked in sync on bass. This is a song that really showpieces Russ Ballard's voice, and as usual, he's in top form on this rendition. This is followed by **Keep on Rolling** with Russ trying to coax the audience to have a good time by joining in. If there's an Argent song that is capable of bringing an audience to life, this is surely the one. Rod lets himself go on electric piano and Jim allows himself to venture into the higher registers on his bass. Again, Russ shouts words of encouragement in an attempt to whip the audience into a frenzy.

Russ introduces the next song as having previously featured at their last New York Show at Carnegie Hall, further strengthening my view that they most likely

only played this one 1973 show at the Palace. This is **The Fakir**, a song that was used to highlight **Bob Henrit's** drumming skills, though as the song gets underway its Rod Argent that dominates proceedings as he explores the capabilities of his monophonic Moog, before turning to piano. Again, Bob and Jim are locked into a backing beat, as Rod briefly improvises into a few bars of his Zombies' hit **She's Not There**, which draws appreciation from the crowd. He then moves over to mellotron to introduce the drum solo. Often drum solos don't carry over that well on a record or CD, but in Bob's case, I always find his solos musical as well as rhythmical, if that makes sense. Put more simply, I never have the urge to fast forward when listening to a Bob Henrit drum solo. Its good to see that somebody posted a dedicated video of his solo, which I've provided the link for below. The Fakir is a fun piece, and even Russ gets to play some elaborate guitar runs in the interludes in Bob's solo. Interestingly, the sleeve refers to this extended instrumental as **Eastern Jam**.

"Here's something you know" are the spoken words that introduce the next song. Russ and Bob Henrit take control, playing a teasing intro before launching into **He's a Dynamo**, Russ powering through the lead vocal before launching an equally powerful guitar solo. In the background Jim Rodford plays a very melodic bass run. Rod Argent wisely keeps a low profile. This is Russ's baby all the way, and he is clearly enjoying the limelight. Sadly, the audience are slow on taking up the invitation to join in on vocals, but Russ doesn't let them get off lightly, insisting they participate. Again, his vocals are of the highest quality.

For the final track, the spoken introduction suggests that the auditorium is far from full, but this doesn't dampen the response to the group's signature hit **Hold Your Head Up**. This is a powerful rendition, with Rod incorporating Yanky Doodle Dandy into his organ solo.

All things considered, this is a nice collector's piece for **Argent** fans. Yes, there is the occasional wrestling with instrument tuning, but this is what live performances are like, particularly before the introduction of digital synthesizers and guitar tuners. Its authentic, and for that reason alone, I love it.

Finally, a word about the packaging. The booklet included with the CD, features some nice colour photographs of the band plus some liner notes, which pleasingly, appear to be accurate for once. Too often, many retrospective releases feature poorly researched prose, littered with incorrect information and a wealth of spelling mistakes. Thankfully this doesn't appear to be the case here. You Tube links:

- Argent Live in New York City 1973 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wp1-Rp3qjpg>
- God Gave Rock and Roll to You Live Palace Theatre 1973 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmuB9NfdefQ>

· It's Only Money / Hold Your Head Up - Live at the Palace Theatre 1973 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSH\\_PCpvPAE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSH_PCpvPAE)

· Hold Your Head Up Argent 11-7-73 Palace Theater NY <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCftkwQwy5Q>

· Bob Henrit Drum Solo Argent 11-7-73 Palace Theater NY <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofeQYUUmBy8>

## READERS LETTERS

Hi,

When I was a boy back in the 60's I lived in Broxbourne in Herts and I believe my brother Roger Spiers knew Russ.

I know him of course for his great music and have followed his career for many years.

I too am a musician and really appreciate what Russ has done in the industry.

Kind Regards

Rob Spiers

## DID YOU KNOW?

from Dave

### SHE'S NOT THERE

One for Rod Argent followers. Turning on the radio in the early hours of Wednesday 6th November, The Zombies' hit **Time of the Season** was blasting out of the PA system as reporters awaited the results of the Philadelphia vote to elect the new President. Meanwhile, in Washington, assembled followers burst into tears as Vice President Kamala Harris cancelled plans to appear at Howard University and instead headed for home, as results in key States saw her chances of becoming America's first female black President slipping away.

## DAVE'S COVER QUEST

This month's artist has previously featured in the Cover Quest, and now he turns up again. This is another cover version of a song from Russ's LP **Winning**, the 1976 album that featured **Since You Been Gone**. Many won't be aware of this



one, however. It's a song that Russ allegedly wrote after watching a TV documentary.

**No.75**



**Por Un Amor Relampago (A Song for Gail - What Have We Got Her Into?)**  
by Miguel Bosé

**Miguel Bosé**, born Luis Miguel González Bosé, featured previously in Cover Quest (No.14), with a Russ Ballard song titled **I'll Keep Holding On** recorded in 1981. To recap, Miguel is a Panamanian-born Spanish pop musician, born on April 3rd, 1956, to mother Lucia, an Italian actress, and Luis, a Spanish bullfighter. Close friends of the family included **Pablo Picasso** and **Ernest Hemingway**. Aged 15, Miguel became an actor, moving into music four years later. He signed to CBS Records in 1977, before switching to Warner Brothers in 1984. As a teen idol in Spain and across Southern Europe and Latin America, he achieved many major hit records, the biggest in 1985 when his song **Amante bandido** topped the charts across Latin America and in Spain.

In 1983, Miguel recorded Russ Ballard's **A Song for Gail**. Re-titled **Por Un Amor Relampago**, which translates from Spanish to English as **For a Lightning Love**, the adaptation is credited to Luis Gómez Escolar. Besides opening Side Two of Bosé's LP **Made in Spain**, the song also features on the double vinyl LP compilation **Miguel Bosé**, released by Sony Records in 2022.

Music aside, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Bosé was a very active denialist, among other things questioning the effectiveness of masks, leading to him having several posts and videos removed from social media.

Here is a link to the song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=td4dGnYheqY>