



(New header by Sven)

Official Blog of the Russ Ballard Band, Trading Boundaries gig in East Sussex.

Monday 3rd August

Four days before the show.

Around midday we are greeted by the awful news that John Miller (Russ's powerhouse of a drummer) is in hospital. He's suffering from kidney stones and the pain began yesterday.

The medical staff are assessing him before making a decision on the way forward.

(I think to myself, I know exactly how he's feeling....I've had it twice....the pain is like nothing you have ever experienced before.)

I call Russ straight away who answers the phone immediately with "something's wrong isn't it?". Afterwards he quickly picks up the phone to John and subsequently, the band.

Can we get another drummer in? Not enough time even with two rehearsals this week.

Do we cancel? Absolutely not.

Whilst there is an outside chance of John making it at this point, it's extremely unlikely. A decision is quickly made by Russ that the show will go on, even if it's a semi acoustic set.

Tuesday 4th August

It's confirmed that John will miss the show. Discussions start on what the set will look like. Do they play the same songs as planned or is the set adjusted to suit the new dynamic of drums being absent?

NEW YORK GROOVE
RENE' DIDN'T DO IT
IN THE NIGHT
DREAM ON
TWO SILHOUETTES
HOLD YOUR HEAD UP
A WOMAN LIKE YOU
LIAR
IT'S ONLY MONEY
DAY TO DAY
SINCE YOU BEEN GONE
FIRE STILL BURNS
VOICES
CAN'T HEAR YOU NO MORE
GOD GAVE R-N-R
(MIRACLES)

Everyone sends their best wishes to John. He seems in good form, despite everything.

Wednesday 5th August

A rehearsal is planned for today in the form of a three way jam between Russ, PJ and Paul (Marc on keyboards joins us tomorrow).

They have an excellent day in the studio and make a lot of progress. PJ and Paul are staying over in a local hotel given the last rehearsal tomorrow and I arrive late afternoon too. That can only mean one thing.....Curry Night! PJ, Paul, Russ, Denny and myself

have a lovely evening with a nice glass or two and some great stories around the table.

Thursday 6th August

It's a 10am meet at Russ's and the guys are there early to set up.

While they are doing so I sit with Russ in his conservatory and he runs me through his daily fitness routine. The weights are heavy! All of a sudden he's on the ground doing sit ups.....then resistance work.....this man puts most of us to shame. It's a proper daily routine.

The band start to run through the set list and it goes brilliantly. I am fortunate to sit in the corner by Marc and enjoy the show!



As each song goes by, suggestions are made on how to “adapt” the songs in John’s absence. Of course some songs need more adjustment than others (“Liar” for instance, is one of the songs that sounds very familiar and doesn’t need to be changed too much).

The one thing that hits you is the harmonies, how clear they are. All three of the guys are great singers in their own right and it shows. Russ himself is belting out the songs like he’s a 30 year old.

A quick break for lunch (thanks for the sandwiches Denny) and I also make a contribution with Pastel De Nata’s I have brought over from Portugal for the guys. If you haven’t tried them, you must, a light pastry with a custard filling. Mmm.

There are also Portuguese vegan biscuits for Russ and Denny.

Back in the studio the set run through is completed, finishing with “I Don’t Believe In Miracles”.....a three part harmony is rehearsed for the performance and sounds amazing. Russ of course moves over to the keyboards for this number. (If you can, have a look

on Russ's Facebook page for a couple of videos of this. I can't put them into this email. Sue).

After dinner in the evening, PJ and I go and enjoy a couple of after dinner glasses of wine in an amazing setting at a local golf club. Then it’s time for bed....showtime tomorrow!

Friday 7th August

It’s an 11 o’clock meet at Russ’s and Paul Meredith our driver, merch man and lots more arrives. Good to see him again.

Paul Bond is going direct and so it’s just Russ, Paul M, myself and PJ in the van and we start our journey over to Sussex. It makes a change to do this in shorts and bright sunshine. ☀️

The usual “van banter” prevails and the time goes quickly.

We do however have issues finding a pub open for a comfort break.....the first one is closed (even though it is opposite the appropriately named “Spout Lane”). Eventually we find one and we stop off with Russ treating us to a round of non alcoholic drinks (you see how professional these boys are??? 🤔).

Upon arrival at The Trading Boundaries venue we immediately get a taste of this amazing place. Russ climbs into a shed to get some shade..... 😊



If you ever have the opportunity of catching a show at Trading Boundaries, I can highly recommend it. It has an amazing shop, rooms where you can stay over, a huge garden and a very dangerous Roger Dean exhibition upstairs. Roger did the original album art

for Yes, Rick Wakeman, Asia and many others. Trading Boundaries are the official outlet selling his prints and other wonderful stuff. Bring your credit card though....one original on the wall was £170,000....😬



The guys unload and set up while the staff are busy setting the tables for the evening. What a setting.

We are shown to the Green Room and Russ hangs his stage gear up (well, actually that was me....😬😬).

We are waiting to greet the co owner Michael Clifford, a former musician himself but in the meantime we meet his son who is brilliant and makes us feel at home. He also takes Paul B and myself on a tour of the Roger Dean gallery....this could get expensive 😬.

Sound check time and Marc identifies a rogue sound he can hear.....it takes a little time to eliminate it. Still four hours to show time mind you.

Dojo Tohyama is here tonight.....great to see you Dojo....did you know Dojo is a former martial arts European champion? Just in case you were ever thinking of arguing with him....😬



Russ and I take a walk outside and sit down and chat in the shade. He suggests it would be good to eat outside (we get fed by the venue), great idea.

Back in the Green Room, the guys arrange the set to accommodate the two halves of the show. They also put the finishing touches to the end of "Miracles". I remember how Russ finished the song with two last chords at the Argent reunion show (High Voltage Festival 2010) and he intends to replicate that.

Time for dinner and we are treated to the most amazing meal by the TB staff....the crowd are eating the same dishes and everyone I speak to agrees that the food is something else. I feed this back to Michael.

We sit outside and are joined by Dojo, Michelle Turner and her husband David.

Showtime!!! Michael wants to speak to the audience before Russ comes on to remind them of forthcoming events etc and therefore I get the honour of actually being introduced myself before I introduce the boys (if you know what I mean...).

A blistering "New York Groove" is the opener and the audience are lapping it up. By the time "Rene" and "In The Night" are delivered the band are on fire and the decision to continue semi acoustic is more than fully justified. (But we did miss you John...😭).

The first half is more album track led with the second half featuring hit after hit.....if you were there, which did you prefer?

Talking of the second half, it begins with a brief "interview" with Russ where he shares some stories before welcoming the band back on stage for "So You Win Again". (See video on FB page).

A fantastic "Miracles" and "God Gave" closes the show....the audience seem to have loved it. The band retire to the Green Room for some quick refreshment and then Russ comes out to the Merch table to sign items and take selfies etc. A lot of the audience are

going to the 100 Club in September after seeing him tonight. Have you got your tickets yet?

Michael thanks Russ for the gig and asks him to sign the resident piano. But he also asks if Russ would play the piano....I don't think everyone was prepared for what happened next.....(I can't put the video in but I caught this from it, Sue.....).



It's time to get in the van and drive to our hotel...it's been a long day!
Grateful thanks to everyone who came and made the evening such a success.

Saturday 8th August

We wake up early and meet at 8, it's time for breakfast.....the van leaves on time at 9am. Until the next time.

Thanks for reading and see you on the next Blog in September.