

Bio information: **RAY RUSSELL**  
Title: **FLUID ARCHITECTURE** (Cuneiform Rune 483)  
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FILE UNDER: **JAZZ / FUSION / EXPERIMENTAL**

**Sonic Structures Caper and Cavort on “Guitarist's Guitarist”**  
**RAY RUSSELL's First Solo Album in Seven Years**  
**FLUID ARCHITECTURE**

*"Like contemporaries Sonny Sharrock and Terje Rypdal, Russell makes it sound as if the guitar is not enough, as if he's reaching for something wilder, something that can't be contained within the 6-string cage."*  
– Jim O'Rourke

*"His stabbing, singing notes and psychotic runs up the fretboard have nothing to do with scalular architecture, but rather with viscera and tonal exploration."* – Thom Jurek, *AllMusic Guide*

*"I believe in the sonic signature. Gil Evans used to say, 'Everyone has a cry. Without it, only notes come out of the instrument.'" – Ray Russell*

*"Less is a bore."* – architect Robert Venturi

Frank Zappa famously characterized music as sculpted air, a notion Ray Russell parlays into another dimension entirely on *Fluid Architecture*. Russell's new collection of unique sonic structures – his first solo album since 2013's *Now, More Than Ever* – reflects the composer and longtime Fender Strat experimentalist's sonic signature – one distinguished by diversity and combining luscious lyricism, screaming expressionism, and an alien vocabulary of textures and colors – often within the same track. Russell's guitar can be as comforting as man's best friend or as threatening as colors out of space.

Past, present, and future entwine on opener "Escaping the Six-String Cage." This sinuous and stately, electronically enhanced edifice subliminally samples Russell's free-music masterpiece, *June 11th 1971: Live at the ICA* (reissued on Jim O'Rourke's Mokai label). It's the perfect introduction to the architectonic underpinnings of Russell's sound(s).

*Fluid Architecture's* arrangements focus on unique configurations featuring collaborators old and new. The first of the album's four extended group combustions, "Turn Right at Ventura," applies a sci-fi spin to echoes of the R&B twang heard during Russell's mid-'60s "James Bond" era with the John Barry Seven. A quintet featuring Russell's former RMS drummer Simon Phillips (of Toto fame and oh-so-much more) cooks and careens during a slightly ominous joy ride down Blue Jay Way's somewhat less groovy neighbor.

"We Go a Short Way Back," "Six In – Six Out," and "A Room Within a Room" display Russell's free-associative compositional strategies amid different groups, all eliciting thrillingly narrative and deeply communicative performances. The first of these is a sort of cosmic shuffle, with Russell navigating at his coolest. "Six In – Six Out" reflects its title, with relatively restrained quartet playing giving way to eerier

extremes. "A Room Within a Room" is a first-take-best-take gem featuring Chris Biscoe's soprano sax poking through themes within themes and a cloud of high-octane misterioso. George Baldwin does most of the bottom-end lifting on bass and Chapman stick, with Mo Foster (the M of RMS) replacing him on "A Room Within a Room." Drummers Nic France and Ralph Salmins appear on "We Go a Short Way Back" and "A Room Within a Room," respectively.

"Moon Dog" is a harmonically formal solo, an emotionally resonant electric elegy for a brave stray dog Russell and his wife rescued from Afghanistan. Another elegy, "One for Geoff," offers a short, sweet acoustic tribute to the late keyboardist Geoff Castle, with whom Russell worked for a half-century.

Although you'll hear little of Russell's extensive experience as a library artist and award-winning soundtrack composer in its chambers, *Fluid Architecture* resonates with Russell's various immersions in R&B, cool jazz, jazz-rock/rock-jazz fusion, and absolute freedom. They're just some of design elements informing a structure that reserves the right to dissolve its boundaries at will. And if you choose to dance to *Fluid Architecture*, ain't nobody's business if you do.

### **RAY RUSSELL BIO**

Guitarist-composer Ray Russell has enjoyed two distinct careers: one as an esteemed session player and award-winning film and television composer, another as an ingenious guitar experimentalist and free-thinking collaborator. Russell made his professional debut as Vic Flick's replacement in the John Barry Seven, with whom he twanged the famous James Bond theme in several Barry-scored films, beginning with 1962's *Dr. No*. He went on to play a stew of jazz, R&B, and other styles with Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames, the Graham Bond Organisation, and the Mike Gibbs Band, where he worked alongside Chris Spedding and Jack Bruce. As an indefatigable session musician, he has recorded and/or toured with Lulu, Paul McCartney, Cat Stevens, Van Morrison, Bryan Ferry, David Bowie, Phil Collins, Scott Walker, Art Garfunkel, Marvin Gaye, Heaven 17, and Tina Turner (check out "Let's Stay Together" on *Private Dancer*). His exquisite playing on *TIME OF THE LAST PERSECUTION* (1971) clinched Bill Fay's position in the cult-folkie pantheon.

Russell was also part of the vibrant London jazz scene that revolved around Ronnie Scott's club. His 1968 solo debut, *TURN CIRCLE*, was the first of a series of increasingly free-wheeling albums ripe for rediscovery. *DRAGON HILL* (1969), *rites and rituals* (1971), *JUNE 11TH 1971: LIVE AT THE ICA* (1971), and *SECRET ASYLUM* (1973) burst at the seams with compositional invention, soundscaping expertise (he's reputedly the first English guitarist with a pedal-board setup), and a flair for collaborative mind-melding. During the seventies he played with prog-rockers and/or fusioners Mouse, Nucleus, and Rock Workshop.

He continued to record in a jazz-fusion vein throughout the '80s and '90s, employing long, swooping tones, lyrical meditations, sudden mood changes, Celtic fantasias, and old-fashioned shredding on albums like *WHY NOT NOW* (1988), *THIS SIDE UP* (1989), and *GUITARS FROM MARS* (1990). Russell returned to his modernist roots on *GOODBYE SVENGALI* (2006), a tribute to Gil Evans, with whom he'd played during the '80s. *NOW, MORE THAN EVER* (2013) offered Russell's restless, bristling jazz-rock conceptions and set the stage for *CELESTIAL SQUID* (2016), a collaboration with California avant-guitarist Henry Kaiser that marked a majestic return to Russell's outer-limits sensibility. Russell joined Kaiser again for *THE DUKES OF BEDFORD* (2020), a spontaneous live adventure featuring guitar-daredevil kinsman John Russell and bassist Olie Brice.

**For more information on Ray Russell:**  
**[www.rayrussell.co.uk](http://www.rayrussell.co.uk) - [www.cuneiformrecords.com](http://www.cuneiformrecords.com)**

**PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS**

Digital [High-Resolution] images available at <http://cuneiformrecords.com/bandshtml/RUSSELL.html>

