

# NOW WE'RE TALKIN'

## A Conversation with Russell Hitchcock of Air Supply

*Air Supply will be performing at Akron Civic Theatre on January 31.*

By Helen Marketti

Russell Hitchcock and Graham Russell have been the talented duo for the band, Air Supply for forty years. The two first met in 1975 in Sydney, Australia while performing in the stage play, "Jesus Christ Superstar".

"I was working in an office for a computer company in 1975," remembers Russell Hitchcock. "One day when I came home from work, my girlfriend at the time told me there were auditions being held for "Jesus Christ Superstar" and that I should attend because I can sing. I didn't think much of it at the time and told her that everyone can sing so why should I try? She said because no one else sings as I do. I ended up going to the audition, brought sheet music with me and sang, "Bridge Over Troubled Water". I didn't even know if I was singing in the right key but I made it and that's how Graham and I first met. He had already been writing songs on his own and then we started working together. I never thought about a career in music and certainly not one that has lasted this long."

Air Supply had dominated the charts during the 80s with many hits that millions are familiar. *Lost in Love, Even the Nights Are Better, Every Woman In the World, All Out of Love, Making Love Out of Nothing At All, Sweet Dreams* and many more. They are still recording new material, touring and working on other projects.

"It's a great shock to us to have a career going this long," said Russell. "We first started in Australia and had major hits. We thought this would be a good thing for us to do for a few years, never realizing at the time how long it would last. As the years went by, I remember mentioning to an audience that we were celebrating eighteen years together at the time. I thought *that* was a long time! Now it has been forty years and it really is quite amazing. I think it's a testament to our songs because it starts with Graham being a brilliant songwriter. We work very hard at what we do. We give of ourselves as much as we can when we are onstage. We play for an hour and fifty minutes. People know most of the songs and that's a great luxury."

Russell continues, "Graham writes the songs. He writes with the passion and vision with what he sees and feels. I do my job to sing. He will ask me my thoughts on a song and I might throw in my two cents to make myself feel important. (*laughs*) There isn't any need for tweaking because Graham knows what he is doing. We have kept it this way since day one of our career. We each have a defined role and do not step on each other's toes. It's the most incredible working relationship that I have ever had and I've seen a lot of them."

"Graham and I do not see each other at all when we're not working. I always look forward to seeing him in the studio and on the road. He lives in the middle of nowhere in Utah whereas I live in the suburbs of Atlanta. We have both been through quite a bit in our personal lives and we have always been there for each other. Neither one of us has any brothers so we rely on each other and have a lot of fun together."

Air Supply was recently inducted into the (ARIA) Australian Recording Industry Association Hall of Fame. In addition to their recent induction and touring, Russell and Graham are involved with the musical, "All Out of Love" which features the classic songs of Air Supply and an original script. They are also working on their 24<sup>th</sup> studio CD due to be released later this year.

"There is a lot of activity going on and we are very fortunate," said Russell. "We have been successful because of our music that was played on the radio. We have always maintained a high level of performance and recordings. I am extremely proud of our career."

"We are looking forward to our first show of the year at Akron Civic Theatre. It's going to be great. We play the songs everyone is familiar with plus some new material. Graham has a solo spot in the show. Our band and our show is high energy and very dynamic. We involve the audience as much as we can. We put a great deal of thought into our shows. We are very grateful that people still appreciate Air Supply."



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