

Last night, Tina and I attended a concert with a group I adored when I was a kid, who fell apart too soon, and made extraordinary music during the important years 1964-1968, the year I graduated from high school. The funny thing about The Zombies is how they failed to catch on despite several monster hits and an album ([Odessey and Oracle](#)) that is also extraordinary but, like the group, commercially unsuccessful—it is considered among the top 100 albums by Rolling Stone [<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/500-greatest-albums-of-all-time-20120531/the-zombies-odessey-and-oracle-20120525>], even though its only hit single was “Time of the Season.” (For the grammarians in the group, and there are many in my literate Posse, the record company misspelled “Odyssey” and they just went with it—probably bad karma.)

I always find it fascinating how much luck and timing play into a group’s success—the original group started in 1962, and broke up in late 1967, but its two creative members—organist Rod Argent and singer Colin Blunstone (and the episodic participation over the years by Chris White)—have collaborated on and off since 1962, and then worked in their own projects (Argent in the eponymous group Argent and Blunstone with the Alan Parsons Project) from 1967 until 1990, when they reassembled and added Argent’s older cousin Jim Rodford (of the Kinks) as their bass player. This core group has been together, with the recent addition of Tom Tooney on lead guitar and Steve Rodford as the drummer. Unlike many other bands, they have an excellent and updated website

[<http://www.thezombies.net/>]. Today, they travel as The Zombies with Colin Blunstone and Rod Argent, and they regularly tour North America, but concentrate most of their tour efforts in Europe. They have continued to produce albums, and worked about 5-6 new songs into the

set, at Houston's Dosey Doe club, but I will confess that when they sang their four signature songs (below), I was in high school all over again, running the seminary jukebox. Blunstone, at 68, is in fine voice, and they are a very tight group, so the songs were crisp and clear in the DD Club's great acoustics and small setting; we were about 30 feet away, in the dinner club setting. He is among the more operatic of rock singers, in the vocal range of the late Roy Orbison, and he still soars, as he has for over 50 years. Blunstone also tours on his own, mostly in the UK and Europe. These guys had all the tools and the talent and the hard work, and should be among rock royalty. This morning, I have been listening to their collected greatest hits as well as the Odessey LP (CD, actually), and am struck by just how much separates the very good from the great groups. in a nutshell, 4 wicked songs and a well-regarded album were just not enough to keep them in the top rank back in those days. Perhaps if the centripetal forces had produced more hits in their early period, when rock groups were expected to be more prolific, etc....

Last night, they also sang several Argent songs, including that group's best known, "Hold Your Head Up" [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBnSWJHawQQ>]. I have made the same mistake that most people singing this song have made, thinking it was "Hold Your Head Up, Whoa, Hold Your Head Up, Whoa," when Argent explained that it was actually "Hold Your Head Up, Woman." Another rock and roll mystery solved, at long last.

As it turns out, this was the last night of their 2014 U.S. tour, but see them next time they come to your area. The Zombies were nominated to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame last year for the first time, and they, along with The Moody Blues, are the two important UK bands from that time that truly deserve induction. Justin Haywood of the Moody Blues is

also conducting a solo tour, and is in Houston in a few weeks, but Tina has put her foot down—for some reason, she thinks that our seeing The Zombies, Springsteen, and Journey are enough in the span of three weeks. She is such a good sport that I have acceded, and will just wait for the complete Moody Blues to come around later. They are on tour now, and I am just hoping for a better time. June is our 30th anniversary, and I married wayyyyyy over my head.

I have assembled YouTube performances for The Zombies' most popular and recognizable songs, so you can enjoy the same happiness we had last night. (And on the tv news this morning, "Tell Her No" was the theme song for a Chanel ad.) I also took a few pictures, which I post here for my Posse's pleasure. I have also put off grading the papers and exams sitting on my desk, as long as I dare.

More to come,

Michael

"She's Not There"

(1964) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKmA_9bSHYI

"Tell Her No"(1964) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqnuI9K5ct4>

"I Love

You"(1965) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJBSO9AdBg4>

"Time of the

Season"(1968) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqnuI9K5ct4>