

# Flashback

## **When the Whip Comes Down**

**CODPIECES AND RIPPED SHIRTS, EYELINER AND MOST OF THE SONGS PLAYED FASTER THAN EVER BEFORE. YES, THE 1981/2 TOUR SAW THE STONES MOVE WELL AND TRULY INTO STADIUM MODE. ONE CONCERT IN ROTTERDAM WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR THE FORMATION OF OUR VERY OWN FAN CLUB! CASTING HIS MIND BACK: JAAP HOEKSMA.**

“Summer’s here. Wind down your windscreen and crank up The Stones’ great, brand new single *Start Me Up*,” announced a leading disc jockey on his prime 6 p.m. slot, officially kicking off yet another Rolling Stones fever in Holland, back in the summer of 1981. I remember it well, sitting ‘round the family’s dining table, instantly losing my appetite for mere food and feeling hungry to go and watch that night’s pop programme on TV.

The following weeks Rolling Stones mania was well on! Magazine after magazine would produce brightly coloured, action-packed Stones photo-specials with a full-action Mick in all his baseball-tight glory and Keith looking his usual mean-wasted self in some torn T-shirt and faded jeans, wielding his trusted axe. Ronnie, all made up with his spiky-haired mullet, grimace firmly in place and Charlie ‘n’ Bill reassuringly lurking in the background.

Images from the new US tour were boldly announced, and shown on the leading TV channels giving us a taste of the brand-new brilliant larger-than-life stage production; a complete rock circus of colours and lights fantastic! It was a pretty good taster of things to come, which happened a year later in 1982, when I saw The Rolling Stones for the very first time.

### **Six years in the waiting**

I had been a Stones fan since 1976. Apart from the odd radio tune, my brother and I started off discovering music in that year as soon as we were allowed to have a record player. I was 12, bro’ was 14 – pretty late, eh? But from then on we both went our separate musical ways. Courtesy of my mate Peter, I soon went for The Stones whilst through his bizarre school mates, my brother ended up with Kevin Ayers and Soft Machine. A clash, and subsequent fight over taking turns on the record player was imminent, and happened about every day.

After purchasing “Out Of Our Heads” and “Between The Buttons”, which at the time were rated “much better” in a review of the brand new “Black And Blue” album, I was completely hooked on this band that already had notched up some 13 years of mighty fine tunes. I remember visiting Paris with my family for a weekend and noticing the tour posters with The Stones running from a mountain, looking like they were really coming at ya! Then there was the moody old mug-shot of them in bold close-up with hairs ‘n’ lips from the Black And Blue photo-shoot; brilliant! But, sadly, at age 12 and a big brother immersed in “The Confessions Of Dr. Dream” there was no chance of me making it to The Stones “live”!

That time came six years later. And what an adventure it was! By that time Peter and I had acquainted other - older - Stones fans who provided us with various bootleg tapes and showed us live videos, so we could follow the band performing from Philly to

Hampton Roads and all stops in between. The approximately two-and-a-half-hour show sounded fantastic with an impressive 25-song set list or more, showcasing tracks from the new "Tattoo You" album and a selection from the back catalogue as well as some great soul and rock 'n' roll covers. We read in the press how a large group of Dutch fans had gone over to see the spectacle with the then-fanclub. Not being able to afford such a trip, we waited in growing anticipation until the band would hit the lowlands.

## **Europe, at last**

It wasn't long before the confirmation of the European leg came through, courtesy of Mick's press conference in London on 28<sup>th</sup> April. Of all European nations we were the first to be put out of our misery and were granted the grand opening show of The Rolling Stones European Tour 1982. Tickets for the first show on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> of June at the Feijenoord Stadium in Rotterdam went on sale immediately that day, swiftly followed five days later by a second one on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>. Both gigs were sold out in a mere few hours' time but Peter and I managed to bag them, feeling pleased as punch that we were able to attend the very first show of the tour. Pretty soon after that a third show was announced and - to our great disappointment - it turned out to be the Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June! So much for our first night stand with The Stones, as on a weekday we were unable to make it. To make matters worse, the show was also on Charlie's birthday, so we really felt that we missed out on the greatest party on earth! Nevertheless, the weekend shows turned out to be an experience beyond our wildest dreams all the same.

## **Psst....wanna buy a fake??**

On the Friday afternoon, we found ourselves strolling through the stadium grounds eyes agape at the vast size of the event. It was the first time that The Stones played a stadium in Holland. We shopped around the market stalls that were set up outside the gates, offering a great selection of Stones merchandise. We were later to find out that these were bootleg products whereas the more desirable official Stones merchandise was on sale exclusively inside the stadium enclosure. Banners advertising the tour's sponsor were everywhere.

It was reported in the press how the band's record label EMI were extremely miffed about the fact that The Stones had chosen blank cassette manufacturer TDK, just when they'd started an anti-home taping campaign!

Perambulating the perimeter we checked out the different entrances and were particularly enchanted by those labelled "VIP only" or "Backstage" and the area full of Edwin Shirley trucks where important-looking people with brightly coloured stick-on passes were walking, and talking into walkie-talkies. I think there 'n' then we must've decided that one day we would make it to the inner sanctum. But at that time we were only yet to make it to our first-time ever seats at a Rolling Stones gig!

Passing security and into the realms of the main event was like entering a secret members-only fairground. In the blazing sunlight against an electric blue sky, the grey concrete structure of the venue lost its towering dullness as a multi-coloured crowd buzzed around its walkways, turning it into some animated anthill. The simple act of buying a tour programme and a couple of official tour T-shirts for some bizarre reason seemed a gratification only granted to us, the select few - thousand! For the first time ever I witnessed how a crowd as large as 50,000 could be so at one with each other. On our way to our seats, through the catacomb, we glimpsed the pastel pinks, yellows and greens of the immense stage for the very first time. What a thrill!

We made it to our balcony seats as early as about three o'clock in a sweltering heat when the first support act George Thorogood and the Destroyers took the stage with a steaming R 'n' B set. The yet only half-filled stadium observed the band in the lazy sunshine and clapped politely without going as crazy as the excellent outfit deserved. It was a different story the night before, when they played a small club in The Hague and

Mick Jagger joined on stage for two numbers sending the place to distraction.

What did make the place jump, was the next act at around six when the stadium started to fill up nicely. That, of course, was The J. Geils Band, with Jaggeresque frontman Peter Wolf and his harmonica-playing side-kick Magic Dick. At the time, immensely popular in Holland with their hit singles *Centrefold* and *Freeze Frame*, they managed to do a proper warm-up job and in my view they were the best Stones support slot to date. None too complicated and good value at the time.

Yet, still, it was nothing compared to what was about to be unleashed upon us! But it would take a while, so the crowd kept themselves busy with stadium games such as the good old, but then brand new, 'Mexican Wave'. Suddenly, on the field down below, a football appeared and a game of "kicking it up to the balconies" had started much to the punters' delight with cheers all around. A brief, weird performance by the Amsterdam Dance Theatre, mostly obscured by a cloud of smoke (special effects?) was put on, I suppose to kill time.

### **The curtains open**

But then, it finally happened! Tu-du-dudum, tu-du-dudum ... we're taking the 'A' Train to Rolling Stones bliss. Cue tour promoter Bill Graham belting it out: "Ladies And Gentlemen ... would you welcome please, The Rooooling Stooones!" The huge pink decorated curtains of The Stones' global sideshow are slowly parting and out pops Mick, ready for action, working the complete width of the massive stage, followed by axemen Ron 'n' Keith strolling up to the edge of the stage, effortlessly kicking the shit out of the catchy opener *Under My Thumb*, already my all-time favourite Stones song!

It's an amazing sight with the crowd down below on the field surging forward to the booming sound from the massive wall of speakers, that now has been turned up a notch or 10! From then on I've always noticed that the support acts at Stones shows always have to play at some half-strength volume. And obviously for a reason! But The Stones being The Stones, we - being what seems some miles away and confined to our narrow seating area - just as well feel this great buzz, getting up on our feet, clapping, singing along and joining in the general fun.

From then on it's simply big-time showtime all the way, for all of us - one massive partying mass of fans swaying to the rockin' and rollin' rhythms blasted at us, encapsulating the whole of the stadium which comes across as extremely well-balanced. I remember realising how a previous feeling of quite simply connecting to the crowd as we walked up through the stadium to our seats now culminates in complete brotherly love as the music we all so love washes over us like a tidal wave.

That first Stones "live" stadium experience (and all thereafter, for that matter) left me in total awe at how the band can easily completely capture a venue of this size. *When The Whip Comes Down* and *Let's Spend The Night Together* are next - two classics with some 10 years between them - and the band is steaming, subsequently whipping the mad Dutch crowd into a frenzy with that great rocker after which Peter and I would eventually name our fanclub. It's *Shattered*.

### **Get to the top...**

A biting rendition of *Neighbours* follows before the band starts slowing down via *Black Limousine* with Ronnie laying down the solos. *Just My Imagination* is a warm highlight with everyone singing along at the top of their voices. Then it's time for the trio of covers: *20 Flight Rock*, with Keith cranking it out Eddie Cochran-style, *Going To A Go-Go* which gets such a reception, it's not surprising that The Stones would choose it to be their next single and that old kinda obscure Chuck Berry nugget *Chantilly Lace* with Mick parading up 'n' down the full stretch of the stage, working the audience as no-one can.

*Let Me Go* rocks the stadium to its foundations and has everyone jumping before we can sit down and relax with some nostalgia courtesy of *Time Is On My Side*. A take on

this song title would form the moniker for the highly successful "Time Is On Our Side"-concert flick of this world tour later on to be seen, probably by all of us here, in the Dutch cinemas. *Beast Of Burden*, *Let It Bleed* and *You Can't Always Get What You Want* complete the easy listening section of the two-hour-plus show perfectly.

### **Dutch tribute**

Then it's on to the band introduction and mid-way the Dutchies decide to give the band a taster of their national football anthem "Olé, Olé" (don't ask). The band, and particularly Mick show great amusement as the chant goes on for what seems forever. Ron Wood is even seen trying to dance to it! Shake it, rhythm Ronnie, shake it! The crowd love it. By now darkness has set in completely and the temperature is still rising. The stage lights now fully work their colourful magic against a night sky.

To great, unreserved acclaim, the Riffmeister comes out to play. Keith leads the band in his own unsurpassed way into a killer of a song: *Little T&A*, which is about Tits&Ass and the latter he sure is kicking tonight! The crowd's going absolutely mental. Complete in blue jeans and a white T-shirt, ripped from the neck, stating in red handwritten-type print the single word "Heaven". And that's exactly where we are – Rolling Stones heaven. What a night!

The rest of the evening seems like blur as via *Tumblin' Dice*, *She's So Cold* and *Hang Fire* the Stones churn out classic after classic for the, now, well-known "home stretch". The extended live version of *Miss You* is simply amazing with Mick prancing around and the stage bathing in 'strip-club' red 'n' purple lights creating an out-of-this-world experience. Hit singles-turned-anthems *Honky Tonk Women*, *Brown Sugar* and chart topper *Start Me Up* just get the whole place jumping and we keep on screaming for more, and mo' 'n' mo'!

*Jumpin' Jack Flash* rocks the joint and when Mick is seen towering over the crowd in a cherry-picker, sheer hysteria is almost tangible! Then the band exit the stage and the lights go down - briefly. The crowd chant for more and the aforementioned football anthem yet again fills the air. Then: "Da-da-dadadaaaa ..." - whoa! The band burst back onto the stage with lights and sound, blasting out *Satisfaction*. Need I say more? We all have been there. It's the grand finale to a show that can only be described as the greatest show on earth! And *that* can only be achieved by the one and only ... Greatest Rock 'N' Roll Band In The World.

### **Who wants to start a fan club?**

By then Peter and I were off, to become their biggest fans. We'd listened to the records, seen the pictures, read the books but now we'd witnessed The Rolling Stones "live", in person and the band, the unit in all its glory. Some five months later we would launch the first issue of our Rolling Stones fanzine, makeshift and photocopied, but fully fuelled and driven by that pure energy that we were exposed to on that fateful Friday night, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 1982.

I know the 1982 tour didn't particularly go down in history as the best tour ever but all I can say is that it was my first tour and that it was an experience I'll never forget! Sadly, I remember liking the magazine pictures of The Stones on their '75/'76 tour better, so I'll blame my brother for that ... and Kevin bloody Ayers!