

Bloodrock was an American rock band based in Fort Worth, Texas that had considerable success in the 1970s. The band was one of the earliest of a number of noteworthy bands to emerge from the Fort Worth club and music scene during the early to mid-1970s.

## Early career

Bloodrock initially formed in Fort Worth in 1963, under the name The Naturals. This first lineup featured Jim Rutledge (b. January 24, 1947) – drums/vocals, Nick Taylor (b. October 29, 1946 - d. March 10, 2010) – guitar/vocals, Ed Grundy (b. March 10, 1948) – bass/vocals, and Dean Parks – guitar. They released their first single in 1965 "Hey Girl" b/w "I Want You" (Rebel MME 1003). Shortly thereafter they changed their name to Crowd + 1 and released three more singles: "Mary Ann Regrets" b/w "Whatcha Tryin' to Do to Me" (BOX 6604), "Don't Hold Back" b/w "Try," and "Circles" b/w "Most Peculiar Things."

In 1967, Parks left Crowd +1 to become the musical director for *The Sonny & Cher Show* (the beginning of a long career as a session musician). He was replaced by Lee Pickens (b. December 8, 194?) – guitar. It was also at this time that Stevie Hill (b. Tulsa, Oklahoma, d. September 12, 2013) – keyboards/vocals joined the group. They continued as Crowd + 1 until 1969 (though some fans of the band recall the band briefly calling themselves Texas) when they changed their name to Bloodrock, conceived by Grand Funk Railroad manager/producer Terry Knight. They also recorded their first album, that Terry Knight produced, *Bloodrock* (Capitol ST-435). The album, released in March 1970, peaked at 160 on the *Billboard* 200 chart.

In 1970, Rutledge moved from behind the drum set to take on lead vocal duties exclusively. Rick Cobb (b. James Richard Cobb III) took over the percussive duties and added his voice to the group as well. This lineup recorded their next four albums: *Bloodrock 2* (ST-491), *Bloodrock 3* (ST-765), *Bloodrock USA* (SMAS 645), and *Bloodrock Live* (SVBB-11038).

## *Bloodrock 2* and *D.O.A.*

*Bloodrock 2* was their most successful album peaking at number 21 on the *Billboard* Pop Album Chart in 1971, mostly on the strength of their single "D.O.A.", which reached number 36 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart on March 6, 1971. "D.O.A." also gave the band considerable regional exposure throughout the Southwest and West, particularly in Texas and Southern California. "D.O.A." was probably the band's most well-known and well-remembered single. The motivation for writing this song was explained in 2005 by guitarist Lee Pickens. "When I was 17, I wanted to be an airline pilot," Pickens said. "I had just gotten out of this airplane with a friend of mine, at this little airport, and I watched him take off. He went about 200 feet in the air, rolled and crashed." The band decided to write a song around the incident and include it on their second album.

## Further career

In 1972 Lee Pickens left to form The Lee Pickens Group and released the album 'LPG' in 1973 on Capitol Records. Jim Rutledge retired from active music altogether, however in 1976 he also released a solo album on Capitol Records entitled: "Hooray for Good Times". Rutledge was replaced by Warren Ham in early 1972. The subsequent album, *Passage* was the last time Bloodrock visited the charts. It peaked at number 104 on the Billboard 200 in 1972.

1973 brought another personnel change: Rick Cobb vacated the drums to be replaced by Randy Reader. This line up recorded one album: *Whirlwind Tongues* (1974).

The end of the road for Bloodrock came in 1975. Randy Reader left the group and an album, *Unspoken Words*, remained unreleased until 2000, where it was included as part of the CD release *Triptych* (along with *Passage* and *Whirlwind Tongues*). *Unspoken Words* featured Bill Ham and Matt Betton.

## 2005 reunion concert

A reunion concert featuring five of the six original members (Jim Rutledge, Lee Pickens, Ed Grundy, Nick Taylor, Stevie Hill, and Chris Taylor (Nick's Son) in place of original drummer Rick Cobb III) was held on March 12, 2005 in Fort Worth, for the benefit of their keyboardist Stevie Hill, to help with medical costs related to his combating leukemia (diagnosed in June 2002). The reunion concert was filmed and released on DVD. Stevie Hill passed away on September 12, 2013 from leukemia.