

Livin 'Blues

Livin 'Blues was a blues rock group from The Hague . Around 1970 the band with Cuby + Blizzards was counted among the absolute top of the Dutch blues world .

The fixed core consisted of Ted Oberg (guitar), John Lagrand (harmonica) and Nicko Christiansen (vocals, born Dominicus Christiaan Jansen). The group's manager was Ted's mother, Françoise Oberg.

History

The band is founded in 1967 by Ted Oberg. After some line-up changes, the single *Murphy McCoy* (written by George Kooymans) is recorded in 1968, alongside Oberg Cesar Zuiderwijk (drums), Gerard Strötbaum (bass guitar), Nicko Christiansen and John Lagrand. The last two were previously the blues duo Indiscrimination. In this line-up, the band provides support for Fleetwood Mac in February 1969 (performances in Rijen , Rotterdam and Amsterdam , among others).

After a second single (*You better watch yourself*) *Sonny Boy* for the Philips label , Strötbaum is replaced by Henk Smitskamp , who previously played in Willy & his Giants, The Motions and After Tea . With the new line-up - again under the production management of Jaap Eggermont - the LP *Hell's Session* is recorded. It is a very strong album that can withstand the comparison with albums of other white blues bands such as John Mayalls Bluesbreakers, Fleetwood Mac and Cuby + Blizzards .

In 1970 Cesar Zuiderwijk (to Golden Earring) and Henk Smitskamp (to Sandy Coast) leave. Their substitutes are resp. Dick Beekman (formerly Cuby + Blizzards) and Ruud van Buuren (formerly Group 1850). Although the band can still be classified as a blues group , influences of progressive rock start to seep through to the second album *Wang Dang Doodle* . The guitar riff from the title track is reminiscent of *Black Night* by Deep Purple . A shortened version of this song is released as a single and is a modest hit. The success gives the band performances throughout Europe , from England to Italy .

In 1971 a tragedy takes place in the life of Dick Beekman, who is forced to leave the group. He is replaced by Johnny Lejeune (formerly Blues Corporation, Jasper Mule / Island). With him the album *Bamboozle* is recorded, of which *LB Boogie* becomes an international hit.

Although the famous English producer Mike Vernon (John Mayall , Fleetwood Mac , Focus) took care of the group in 1972 after the transition from Phonogram to record company Ariola , the drummer troubles continue. Arjen Kamminga plays drums on the LP *Rockin 'at the Tweedmill* , but he has to leave the band a few months later with back problems. Upon Vernon's intervention, Kenny Lamb from the English blues group Jellybread becomes the new drummer. He can be heard on the LP *Ram Jam Josey* , which can hardly be regarded as a blues album. It appears to be the last record of the golden age of Livin 'Blues, because in 1974 the group falls

apart. John Lagrand will play in the Water group, Nicko Christiansen in Himalayas and Ruud van Buuren in Long Tall Ernie and the Shakers .

Ted Oberg feels forced by the contract with Ariola to continue the band. He is therefore the only remaining LB'er who participates at the end of 1974 on the disco - hit *Boogie Woogie Woman* with singer John Frederiksz (known from among others George Cash), Michel Driesten on drums, Ronnie Meyes on guitar and Henk Smitskamp on return bass, coming from the lifted Shocking Blue . At least that line-up appears on the photo cover, because when the band starts promoting the single on TV at the beginning of 1975, Meyes and Driesten appear to have disappeared and so do Cor vd Beek (former drummer of Shocking Blue) and Paul Vink (ex- Finch , keys) along. The latter is already absent on the lp *Live 75* . A year later on *Blue Breeze* (produced by John Sonneveld) the former Shocking Blue rhythm section has been replaced by bass player André Reijnen (former Brainbox) and drummer Jacob van Heiningen (former Galaxis). This LP is the best-selling of the band and especially the popularity in Poland is rising to great heights.

In the Netherlands, however, it is going downhill and in 1978 the band is even without a record contract. Oberg continues to mess with various musicians until 1980. Then he decides to get Nicko Christiansen and John Lagrand back and together with bassist Evert Willemstein and drummer Boris Wassenberg (also known as Beau Wassenberg) he again focuses on the blues rock of ten years old earlier. *Livin' Blues* is therefore one of the few remaining bands during the Beatnach in The Hague (13 June 1980) and therefore one of the most professional acts.

Oberg stops *Livin' Blues* in 1986 after almost twenty years. Christiansen tries it again in 1987 with the LP *Livin' Blues Now* with Joop van Nimwegen (guitar), Aad van Pijlen (bass), Willem vd Wall (guitar), Art Bausch (drums) and veteran John Lagrand. In 1989 the curtain for *Livin' Blues* after the LP *Snakedance* finally falls. The use of the name then remains a point of discussion between (in particular) Ted Oberg and Nicko Christiansen. Oberg in the 90s simply calls his band Oberg. Christiansen plays at the time in a band called New *Livin' Blues* and since 2005 under the name *Livin' Blues Xperience* (LBX). However, this time without John Lagrand, who dies in June 2005 of a cardiac arrest. *Livin' Blues Xperience* consists of Nicko Christiansen (vocals, saxophone, percussion), Loek van der Knaap (guitar), Jeroen van Niele (bass guitar), Kees van Krugten (drums) and Francois Spannenburg (harmonica). The line-up of the band Oberg in 2012 is Liane Hoogeveen (vocals), Mick Hup (guitar), Nico Heilijgers (bass), Paul Damen (drums) and Ted Oberg (guitar).