

Shocking Blue

was a Dutch rock band formed in 1967 in The Hague. It was part of the music movement in the Netherlands that was generally known by the name Nederbeat. The band had a number of hits throughout the counterculture movement during the 1960s and early 1970s, including "Send Me a Postcard" and "Venus", which became their biggest hit and reached number one on the U.S. *Billboard* Hot 100 and many other countries during 1969 and 1970. The band sold 13.5 million records by 1973 but disbanded in 1974. Together with Golden Earring they are considered the most successful Nederbeat-band, if the criterion is scoring hits abroad and especially in the United States.

History

Original era

Shocking Blue were founded in 1967 by The Motions guitarist Robbie van Leeuwen. Other members of the group at this time were Fred de Wilde, Klaasje van der Wal (1 February 1949 – 12 February 2018) and Cor van der Beek (9 June 1949 – 2 April 1998). They had a minor hit in 1968 with "Lucy Brown is Back in Town". When De Wilde was the band's lead singer, the band originally had a sound that was described as cross between The Beatles and Brothers Four.

De Wilde left in 1968 after joining the Dutch army, and van Leeuwen was introduced to Mariska Veres, singing at that time with a club band. He persuaded her to take over the vocals, and the group recorded a worldwide hit with the song "Venus", which had entered the Veronica top 40 hit parade at position #12 the 12 July 1969 and had peaked at number three on 26 July 1969 in the Netherlands. The song was released in the United States and the United Kingdom at the end of the year and reached number one on the *Billboard* Hot 100 in February 1970. It subsequently sold 350,000 copies in Germany and topped the U.S. chart for three weeks, the first song from the Netherlands to do so. It sold over one million copies there by January 1970 and received a gold record awarded by the Recording Industry Association of America. Global sales exceeded five million copies. Other hits include "Send Me a Postcard" in late 1968 and "Long and Lonesome Road" (often mistakenly named as "Long Lonesome Road") in 1969.

"Venus" was followed by "Mighty Joe" (flip-side "Wild Wind") in 1969 and "Never Marry a Railroad Man" (flip-side "Roll Engine Roll") in 1970, both of which sold over a million records. The latter became a top-ten hit in several countries around the world. Later songs were successful in Europe, Latin America, and Asia, including "Hello Darkness", "Demon Lover" (1970), "Shocking You", "Blossom Lady" and "Out of Sight, Out of Mind" (1971), "Inkpot", "Rock in the Sea" and "Eve and the Apple" (1972) and "Oh Lord" (1973), but they failed to make the charts in the U.S. or U.K.

Klaasje van der Wal left towards the end of 1971, following their first trip to Japan (which spawned a live album). In 1974, Robbie Van Leeuwen quit, and Mariska Veres left later that year, leading to the band's split. Veres went on to pursue a solo career until 1982.

Reunions

Shocking Blue reformed with its most famous line-up in 1979 and recorded "Louise" as their first single since their break-up in 1974. The song was never released. They did, however, perform live in 1980 with earlier songs such as "Venus" and "Never Marry a Railroad Man".

The band attempted another comeback in 1984 and released a new single "The Jury and the Judge" with "I Am Hanging on to Love" as the B-side in 1986.

In 1994 the single "Body and Soul" was released.

Members

Former members

- Robbie van Leeuwen (guitar, sitar and backing vocals, 1967–1973)
- Fred de Wilde (vocals, 1967–1968)
- Klaasje van der Wal (bass guitar, 1967–1971; died 2018)
- Cor van der Beek (drums, 1967–1974; died 1998)
- Mariska Veres (vocals, 1968–1974; died 2006)
- Leo van de Ketterij (guitar, 1970–1971; died 2021)
- Martin van Wijk (guitar, 1973–1974)
- Henk Smitskamp (bass guitar, 1972–1974)
- Wim Voermans (bass guitar, 1984-1986)
- Jan Pijnenburg (drums, 1985-1986)
- Michael Eschauzier (keyboards, 1993-2006)
- André van Geldorp (guitar, vocals, 1987-2006)
- Charles Pesch
- Gerben de Bruijn (drums, 1993-1998)
- Michel Schreuder (drums, vocals, 1998-2006)