

NITS - BIOGRAPHY

“Nits are a prolific Dutch art-pop group who fuse classic '60s British Invasion sounds with the influence of new wave bands like XTC and Talking Heads, as well as the synth experiments of Kraftwerk.” (All Music Guide)

1974

The Nits are formed by Henk Hofstede, Alex Roelofs, Michiel Peters and Rob Kloet. It is Kloet who comes up with the name for the band. The band's musical influences vary from country rock to Merseybeat. This results in short melodic pop songs. The band spends the first couple of years recording demos.

1977

On March 12 the single *Yes Or No* is released. The song gets lots of airplay but does not make it into the charts.

1978

Eighteen months behind schedule the album *The Nits* comes out, which was recorded in the famous Rockfield Studio in the UK. The Nits also feature on the punk and new wave compilation album *Keihard en Swingend (Tough and Swinging)*.

1979

In January and February the Nits tour the country with new wave group the Tapes. The jumpy and slightly intellectual sound of the Nits is taking shape on the band's second album, *Tent*, which is produced by Robert-Jan Stips (ex-Supersister, Golden Earring, Sweet d' Buster and producer of the successful Gruppo Sportivo albums). The single *Tutti Ragazzi* is a sizeable hit and according to UK music magazine NME *Tent* is the second best European album of the year.

1980

All band members give up their daytime jobs to become professional musicians. *New Flat*, the band's third album, comes out in November. With the release of this album the band consolidates its status in the international club scene.

1981

The single *Red Tape*, which is taken from the album *Work*, is another hit for the Nits. In the meantime, producer Robert-Jan Stips joins the band on keyboard. Bassist Alex Roelofs leaves the band. Stips releases his first solo album *S.T.I.P.S.*

1983

Stips comes up with an overwhelming amount of sampled sounds for the new album *Omsk*. With the single *Nescio* they score their first Top 10 hit *Omsk* wins an Edison Music Award. In November of this year they release the mini album *Kilo*, which includes the hit single *Sketches Of Spain*.

1984

The album *Adieu, Sweet Bahnhof*, recorded with Stars On 45 -producer Jaap Eggermont, comes out.

1985

Adieu, Sweet Bahnhof is less successful than expected. After the promotional tour for the album guitarist Michiel Peters quits. He is replaced by two guest musicians: Petra Lugtenburg (backing vocals) and Joke Geraets (bass).

1986

In May the album *Henk* is released, a slightly modest and elaborate record. The band starts its own label, Werf Records, and comes up with a project called *La Grande Parade*. The project involves 39 Dutch musicians from bands like *W.A.T.*, *MAM*, *Tent*, the Dutch and *5 Slag 1 Wijd*, who are inspired by an exhibition of the same name in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.

1987

The album *In The Dutch Mountains* comes out and the title track climbs the European charts. The band again receives an Edison Music Award.

1988

With the release of the slightly dark mini album *Hat* and the single *The Dream* the band continues its success. The band tours Europe, the Soviet Union and the US.

1989

The band's commercial highlight comes with the release of the video and triple live album *Urk* (hit: *Adieu, Sweet Bahnhof*). This year Nits (as they are now called) receive the BV Popprijs ('Pop Award'), a Gouden ('Golden') Harp and an Edison Music Award.

1990

The album *Giant Normal Dwarf* is an artistic and commercial disappointment. The singles *Radio Shoes* and *Giant Normal Dwarf* fail to make it into the charts.

1991

Early in the year the band goes on tour without Geraets, who is ill and will later stop altogether with the band. The band performs as opening act at the New Music Seminar in New York and also plays at the Roskilde festival.

1992

Robert-Jan Stips writes a symphonic composition called Hjuvi, A Rhapsody In Time. In June the band performs the composition several times in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. The rhapsody is also released on CD. In October *Ting* is released, a melancholic and slightly experimental album with two piano's and classical percussion instruments. Guest musicians on the album are Martin Bakker (bass) and Peter Meuris (percussion, violin and ex-Tapes). The single *Soap Bubble Box* dents the charts.

1993

Nits compose the music for the Dutch and French episode of the BBC travel programme Rough Guide.

1994

The album *dAdAdA* comes out. A fairly light album with easy, accessible pop tunes. In the last week of the year Nits perform with cabaret artist Freek de Jonge under the name Frits. They perform songs from Freek's cabaret duo Neerlands Hoop, and also Dutch-language interpretations of Nits songs.

1995

The album and video *Dankzij De Dijken* (or 'In The Dutch Mountains') are released. Nits compose the score for *Bedlam Britannica*, a BBC docudrama. The compilation album *Nest*, the video *Vest* and the CD *Quest* are released as a Nits box set. The single *Broken Wings* goes with an extra CD containing three covers of Beatles songs. The group also covers the Boudewijn de Groot track *Een Meisje Van 16* ('A Girl Of Sixteen') for a Boudewijn de Groot tribute.

1996

Robert-Jan Stips announces his departure from the band. In August the band plays at the Uitmarkt in Amsterdam. The following month Stips performs with his new band Stips. Kloet starts redecorating the Werf Studios and Hofstede tours with Swiss band Stop The Shoppers.

1997

Stips, Roy Bakker, Martin Bakker and Hella de Jonge receive an award for best musical support of the Freek de Jonge show *Gemeen Goed*. Kloet and Hofstede perform (under the name Nits) at a festival in Helsinki, Finland. They have also started recordings for a new album. Robert-Jan Stips releases more solo material under the name S.T.I.P.S.

1998 - 1999

Hofstede and Kloet record the album *Alankomaat* (Finnish for the Netherlands). Apart from Finnish guest musicians like Kimmo Kajasto, Wimme, Ursula Länsman and Tuuni Länsman, the album also features new Nits members Arwen Linnenmann (bass, backing vocals) and Laetitia van Krieken (keyboards, backing vocals). In 1998 and 1999 the band goes on an extensive tour of The Netherlands, France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Austria and of course Finland.

2000

Nits have split with Columbia and their new album *Wool* is released on the Play It Again Sam label. The single *Ivory Boy* is about a Nits fan that died of cancer. His last wish was to record an album with the band. Nits record several Dutch-language songs written by the fan. The songs are recorded for the fan's family exclusively. During the sessions for *Wool* Henk Hofstede records a disco record in the Swedish language. Sony Music releases the compilation *Nits Hits* with remastered versions of all Nits singles. The first edition of the album contains the bonus CD *Urk*. The group also record a TV show for which several guests have been invited: Ibenise McBean (vocals), the Zapp String quartet, the Styles Horns, Leona Philippo (vocals) and Peter Meuris (marimba). As part of the celebrations concerning four hundred years of relations between the Netherlands and Japan Nits, Junkie XL and Arling & Cameron go to Japan for several shows. The band's 25th anniversary is held in *Stairway To Heaven* in Utrecht. One of the highlights of the day is a performance of *Lice*, a band which consists of Nits fans from various countries who have come together especially for this occasion.

2001

Vera van der Poel (Mimezine) replaces Leona Philippo.

2002

Hofstede is working on a solo project based on the video appliances he designed for the Museum of Contemporary Arts in Lyon, France.

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2003

In the autumn Robert-Jan Stips joins Nits for an extensive tour to celebrate the band's upcoming 30th anniversary. New album *1974* is released on PIAS (Benelux), Sony (Germany-Austria-Switzerland) and Rockadillo Records (Scandinavia).

Distribution: Bonnier-Amigo (Sweden, Norway, Denmark), Warner (Finland) www.rockadillo.fi records@rockadillo.fi