

Thumbs Up from Basher

Theo de Grood, Roggel, the Netherlands

Theo was struck by surprise when he answered the phone at home one afternoon in June 1978. His own band was not booked that weekend, and with a free night, he was planning to attend a Rockpile gig at the Posjet club in a town nearby. The voice on the phone was calling from the very same place, and after accepting the given offer, Theo hung up with a sense of panic. He had to call in the boys in no time.

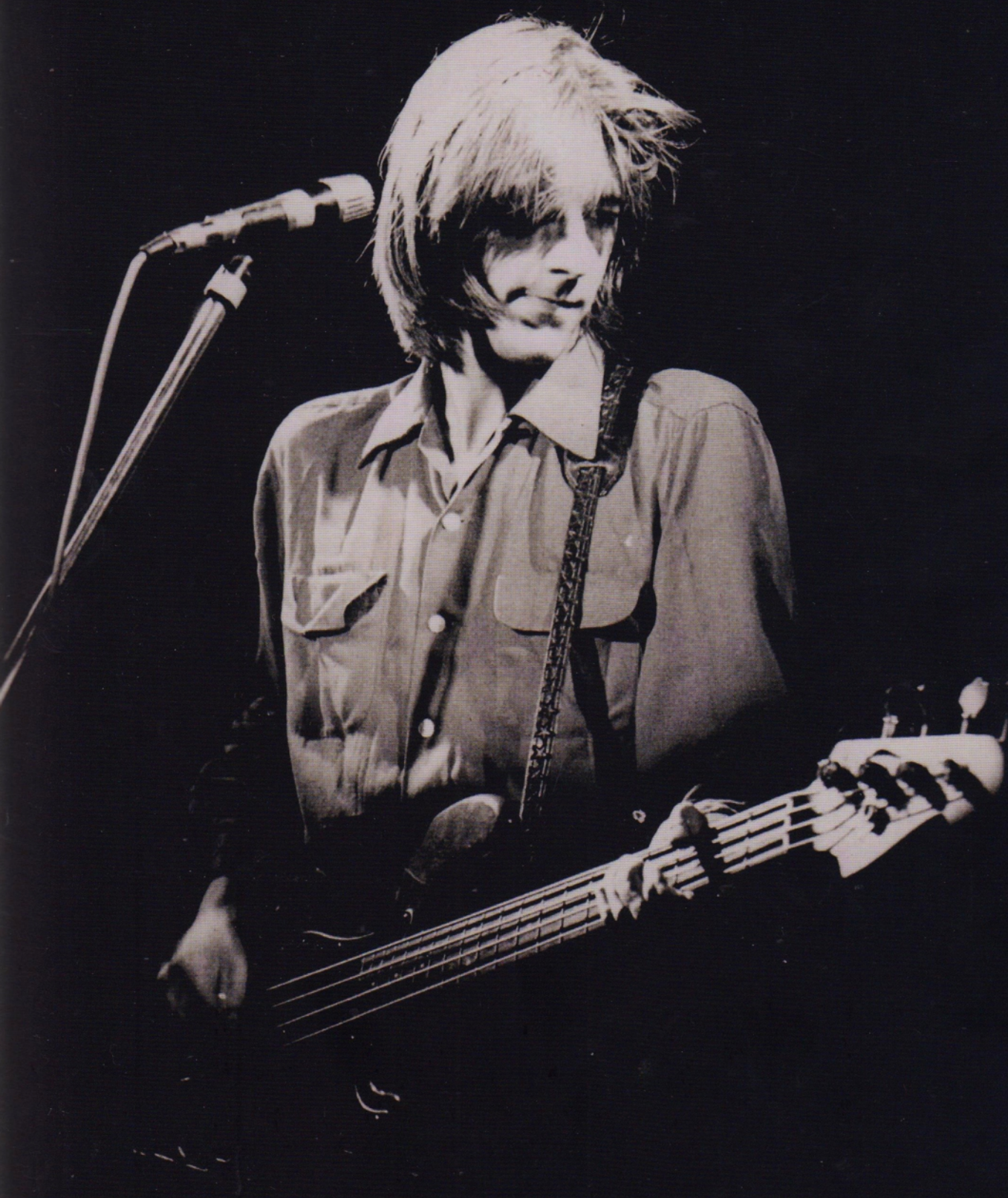
I played bass in a band called Girls Walk By. It was a rather popular band, especially in the south of the Netherlands, roughly between 1978 and 1982. We played our own material but were also great admirers of the British scene around Nick Lowe, Dave Edmunds, Mickey Jupp, Graham Parker, and above all the Brinsley Schwarz band. The Brinsleys were a big inspiration for our own work, and we covered several of their songs. We used to open our set with 'Surrender to the Rhythm', and we did 'Don't Lose Your Grip on Love' and 'Hypocrite'. Further on we used to play 'Happy Doing What We're Doing' and 'Down in the Dive' (during which our band was introduced). And when Rockpile added 'Play That Fast Thing (One More Time)' to their repertoire, we started to play it too, but more like the Brinsleys version on the *Please Don't Ever Change* album from 1973. Later in our career the focus shifted more towards our own work, but that also remained very much inspired by these examples.

We had seen the Brinsley Schwarz band many times in our neighbourhood. Whenever they visited the European mainland, they played in a club called Mafcentrum in the small town of Maasbree, near Venlo. We must have seen them there at least four or five times. They felt very at home there – in the end, some of them could even order a beer in the local dialect.

Anyway, the 30th of June 1978 Rockpile were going to play at a club called Posjet in Tilburg. It came to my knowledge about a week before, and I was definitely planning to go there because we didn't have to play ourselves that night. But in the afternoon of that same day, I was very pleasantly surprised by a phone call from Posjet. We had played there before, apparently, they had liked us, and considered us a good match with Rockpile.



*Girls Walk By on stage, a couple of weeks after they had opened for Rockpile.
Photo courtesy of Theo de Grood.*



*Nick Lowe performing with Rockpile
at the Posjet Club in 1978.
Photo by Theo de Grood.*

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So, they asked if we would be able to support the Brits that very same evening. It was a compliment in itself, of course, and no one had to think twice about it. But it also caused some panic before I got hold of all the band members, and before we had packed up our gear and went on our way. It was about an hour's drive to the city of Tilburg.

Posjet was quite new back then. It was part of the sports- and entertainment-facility at the Catholic University of Brabant, and we often played there. The club had two stages. There was a hall for about 500 people, and downstairs was a basement pub for some 100 guests. The place had a great atmosphere with all friendly students, and alongside the national scene, bands like the Cure, Madness, Split Enz, and Talking Heads played the venue around this time.

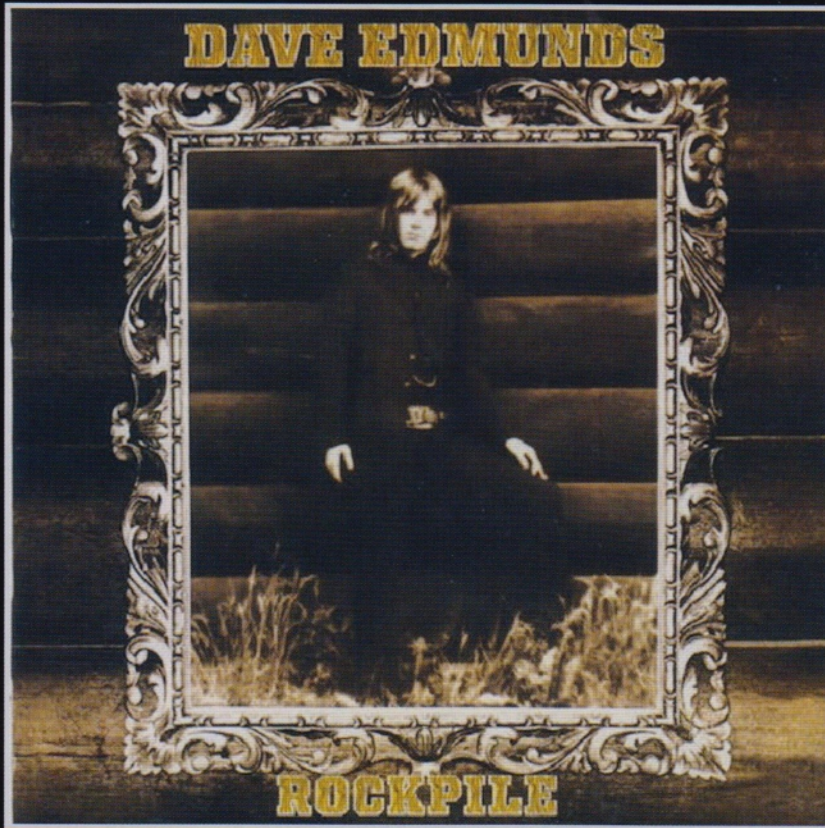
We managed to get there on time for the gig, and when Rockpile arrived, we had already started our opening set. Their equipment was already set up. Apparently, they were so confident of the preparations their road crew had made, that they didn't need a soundcheck. On their way backstage the band entered the hall we were playing. Nick Lowe and Terry Williams made a short stop to check us out, and I got a thumbs up from Nick before he and Terry went on. I was so nervous that I still can't remember exactly which song we were playing, but in retrospect, I like to think it was 'Surrender to the Rhythm'. From the beginning to the end of our band career we kept that song on the setlist.

When Rockpile finally entered the stage, they played extremely loud. Dave Edmunds had his 130 W Music Man cranked up full, and he stood about 50 centimetres in front of it. They played for about an hour, and it was an impressive and very well-oiled machine. Hardly any pause between songs – just one-two-three-four,

and the machine went on. But sometimes not even that! They managed to start all at the same time, in the right tempo, without even having to count in. It was an impressive experience for an up-and-coming band like us, and undoubtedly one of the best concerts, of one of the best bands, I ever saw. It was therefore a pity that they had to leave immediately after the gig. There was no time at all for some personal contact, more than another thumbs up from the Basher himself. But I was dumbstruck anyway by their show and performance.

'They played for about an hour, and it was an impressive and very well-oiled machine.'

A few years before Rockpile shook the foundations of the Posjet club, my band mate, Gé Reinders, went to Wales with some friends. They wanted to visit Rockfield Studios, where at the time Dave in particular did a lot of recordings and production work. He lived in the nearby town of Monmouth, but neither he nor any of the members of the Brinsley Schwarz band were there at that moment. As a matter of fact, they missed Dave by a day. He had been working in the studio the day before they arrived. But Gé and his friends were allowed to camp on the studio site and stayed in the neighbourhood for a few days. In the evening they attended an all night long recording session with the Welsh band Man, and it was the only time they had witnessed a technician cut a 2-inch 24 track tape and glue the beginning of the first take and the end of the second take together. They didn't use a click track but it worked! The next day they were also invited by Dave's ex-wife, for tea and cake in her beautiful villa. They had recognized the house from the cover of Dave's first solo album, *Rockpile*.



1. DOWN DOWN DOWN * (Burton) 2:52
Ring Maker Music Ltd.
2. I HEAR YOU KNOCKING (Bartholomew/King) 2:48
Francis Day, Britico, NCB
3. HELL OF A PAIN (Williams/Edmunds) 2:59
Melanie Music, MCPS, Britico, NCB
4. IT AIN'T EASY (Davies) 3:11
Rondor Music, Irving Music, MCPS, NCB
5. THE PROMISED LAND (Berry) 2:37
Tristan Music Ltd.
6. DANCE DANCE DANCE *** (Young) 2:58
Kinney Music, MCPS, Britico, NCB
7. (I'M A) LOVER NOT A FIGHTER (Collier) 3:33
Ivy Music, Britico
8. EGG OR THE HEN ** (Dixon) 4:15
Copyright Control
9. SWEET LITTLE ROCK & ROLLER (Berry) 2:39
Jewel Music Ltd.
10. OUTLAW BLUES * (Dylan) 5:09
Kinney Music, MCPS, Britico, NCB

Tracks 1-10 originally released as Regal Zonophone SLRZ 1072

BONUS TRACKS

11. I HEAR YOU KNOCKING SINGLE MIX 2:48
(Bartholomew/King)
Single A-Side UK-Marm MAM 1, ©1970
Francis Day, Britico, NCB
12. BLACK BILL (Edmunds) 3:09
Single B-Side UK-Marm MAM 1, ©1970
Melanie Music Ltd.
13. I'M COMING HOME (Trad. Arr. Edmunds) 3:02
Single A-Side UK-Regal Zonophone RZ 3037, ©1971
Melanie Music Ltd.
14. COUNTRY ROAD (Edmunds) 3:11
Single B-Side UK-Regal Zonophone RZ 3037, ©1971
Melanie Music Ltd.
15. BLUE MONDAY (Bartholomew/Doraine) 2:51
Single A-Side UK-Regal Zonophone RZ 3037, ©1971
Frank Music Ltd.
16. I'LL GET ALONG (Williams) 2:59
Single B-Side UK-Regal Zonophone RZ 3037, ©1971
Melanie Music Ltd.

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REP 4966

(LC) 08005

Regatta

All tracks recorded in stereo.
Except tracks 11, 12, 13, 14 recorded in Mono.
John Williams - Back & Backup vocals
All other instruments - Dave Edmunds

Engineers - Dave Edmunds, Ralph Downes
Recorded at Rockfield Studios, Monmouth,
S. Wales, Great Britain
Special thanks to Graham & Shirley Ford
Cover Photo - Neil Jones
Producer - Dave Edmunds

B.J. Cole - Fiddle/Steel/Terry Williams - Drums
- Andy Fairweather Low - Guitars & Drums
- B.J. Cole - Fiddle/Steel
Promoted Land - recorded in the summer of 66
at The Pointe Lott at Rockfield

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DAVE EDMUNDS ROCKPILE

REP 4966

Rockpile was Dave Edmunds' first solo album, released in January 1972. There is no connection to the band that would become known as Rockpile, other than that Terry Williams played drums on a few tracks.