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17.04.07. ΠΡΙΝ ΑΠΟ 40 ΧΡΟΝΙΑ ..... (του Ν.Π.)



Τα παρακάτω γράφτηκαν από το δημοσιογράφο Δήμο Πασσά που χρησιμοποίησε σαν υλικό πολλές "πηγές" της εποχής όπως :

- εφημερίδα Απογευματινή στις 17 Απριλίου 1967 ( άρθρο για τους γιε-γιεδες )
- το περιοδικό News of the World ( έκδοση 5 Φεβρουαρίου 1967, γράφει για τους Stones )

- Διάφορες εφημερίδες της εποχής ( που έχουν και την συνέντευξη τύπου όπου ο ηλίθιος δημοσιογράφος ρωτάει τον Mick με σκοπό να αποδείξει ότι είναι χαμηλού επιπέδου τι γνωρίζετε για τον Σαίξπηρ και εκείνος απαντά εσείς τι γνωρίζετε για τον Όμηρο ! ) και το περιοδικό " μοντέρνοι

ρυθμοί " που έβγαζε ο Μαστοράκης , ο οποίος ενώ έφερε τους Stones ( και σκόπευε να φέρει τους Kinks και τους Animals ) όταν μετά απο λίγες μέρες ήρθε η δικτατορία αποστασιοποιήθηκε πλήρως απο τα γεγονότα και τους κακούς ' γιε-γιεδες ' λέγοντας ότι υπάρχει και ' καλή ' νεολαία και 'καλοί " ξένοι μουσικοί ( όχι σαν τους ' αλήτες ' Stones , κλπ ) .

THE ROLLING STONES LIVE

17th APRIL 1967  
Panathinaikos Stadium  
Athens, Greece

PAINT IT BLACK

It was thirty years ago today, on Monday April 17 1967, when the Rolling Stones played in the Panathinaikos Stadium in Athens. Dimos Passas tries to rebuild piece by piece the chronicle of a very well expected disastrous row of events.

10.30, Elliniko Airport. Rarely before have we seen such a vast and fanatical group of people gathering in the airport to welcome one of its idols, whether of artistic or political origin. The yeah-yeah's of Athens are all set, arriving at the airport many hours before the flight is scheduled to land, in vans, private cars, impressive motorbikes - the capital's teenagers are all here to welcome the Rolling Stones. Most of these lively nineteen year olds are dressed in varicolored, fancy clothes and they have long hair and sideburns. They even wear sunglasses to resemble followers of the nouvelle vogue from abroad. Schoolgirls (and there's many of them) wear ribbons reading "Rolling Stones" across their chests and hopeful young men carry badges with the photographs of the ... earthly gods of shake"

Apogevmatini newspaper, April 17 1967, "Yeah-Yeah Bands"

Athens was the last city the Rolling Stones would visit to conclude their European tour, which had started twenty-three days earlier, in Malmo, Sweden, under the worst circumstances possible. The band had already started entering its most difficult era yet, since the last days of the previous year. The first double strike came from the death of Tara Browne, friend of Brian Jones, on December 18th, the same day when Chrissy Shrimpton unsuccessfully tried to kill herself following Jagger's decision to dump her after a three-year-old affair, for Marianne Faithfull. Jones, feeling more insecure than ever, started taking guitar lessons to improve his playing. Having lost the control of the band once and for all, he was looking for an outlet. "Let's Spend The Night Together" was out in January and its transmission was banned in many American radio stations, despite the fact that Jagger had changed the lyrics during the "Ed Sullivan Show" performance, singing "Let's Spend Some Time Together". And it was not getting any better.

On February 5, News of the World published a story in which Jagger seemed to be replying positively to the journalist's question about having taken LSD. Mick responded by pressing charges against the newspaper. A week later, a squad of policemen, following an anonymous phone call, raided in the house of Richards in Sussex and arrested the whole company, putting an end to a trip which had started one day before. Trial was set for May 10 and Keith commented: "Getting arrested is not something pleasant."

But it certainly isn't a boring experience either - and getting bored is the worst thing that can happen to you". As if all those weren't enough, yet another scandal was about to emerge by the 23rd, when Jagger and Faithfull arrived eight minutes after princess Margaret at the Royal Opera House to see a performance of the Paradise Lost ballet. British Press expressed its disapproval and the collision of a pop (?) group with the establishment reached unprecedented heights. To escape all this trouble, Keith, Brian and Anita Pallenberg along with Mick and Marianne left for Morocco (Mick and Marianne took a plane there, while the others preferred to travel by car). On the way to Morocco, Jones had an asthma attack and had to stay back in France, celebrating his birthday at the hospital and giving Richards a chance to steal his girl. "They took my music, they took my band, now they even took my love", said Brian, who at this time begun his self-destructive fight which was to last for the next two years.

With their names included in Interpol's red list and Anita's two "fiances" unwilling to even exchange glances, the Stones embarked on March 25th on their episodic European tour, facing major problems in all countries' customs. Almost every gig would end in a riot. In Sweden, policemen aided by trained dogs, tried to "enforce order" while the audience was struggling to climb on the stage. In Vienna, one of the fans lit and threw a smoke producer causing a great deal of turmoil, which led to 154 people being arrested. But the worst of all was Warsaw. The Stones were the first band to play in the Eastern Bloc. Tickets were all sold out, purchased by the Party's members and collisions among the police and the ten thousand youngsters (who wanted to see the gig, but weren't able to do so) had started from early in the morning to be continued until late at night, with tear gases and dozens of people getting arrested.

On April 15 and while the Stones were in Holland for yet another round of fights under the sound of music, Greek magazine Modern Vibes (Monternoi Rithmoi) in one of its special editions, advertised the upcoming gig of "the number one band in the world" in Athens. "Tomorrow, Sunday (at 10.55 at night) they are expected to arrive at the Elliniko Airport. They are anticipated with unexampled enthusiasm by the youths of Athens. The Rolling Stones. Brought to you by: industry Lido Varsakis SA and Nikos Mastorakis. A celebration of rhythm and melody - Monday, at 8, in Panathinaikos Stadium". According to his saying, Mastorakis was "crazy about them" and so decided to bring them to Greece. "I had bootlegs of their shows in England and America, along with the Kinks, the Four Tops and Cliff Richard and I used to play

those gigs on the air on my Picnic radio show... In one of these Stones concerts I managed to get in touch with their manager and so it started. We had some talking and they told us they would be free, some time in April. Then we contacted mayor of Athens, Mr. Giorgos Plitas, who agreed to chip in as a sponsor. If I remember right, their wage at the time was 350.000 drachmas (about \$ 875). This included setting up the gig and accommodation at the Hilton hotel". But not everything worked out as planned.

The first problems came up right with the Stones' arrival. The reception, which had been planned by two thousand fans for Sunday night, was a total failure since in the airport fans were greeted by "heavy police force", led by Athens police force head and one way or another the band did not show up. "The coastal avenue leading to the Elliniko Airport was crowded with youngsters hysterically screaming: "Shame!" The cause for all the trouble was the police forbidding entrance to the airport. All screams and protests were in vain". The ones who did arrive that night were the technical crew for the gig, who were willing to sign autographs, hiding their real identities and even managing to fool Apogevmatini journalist Aggelos Miliadis, who published the photograph of an unknown guy, claiming it was Keith Richards (note: maybe it was Glyn Johns).

"At 10.55, after the plane landed, arrived the band's charming guitarist Keith Richard, known for his LSD use scandal. He was accompanied by the band's impresario and Greek shake maniac girls started fainting". One can tell that it was a mistake just by the description given to Keith...

On Monday, April 17 1967, Athens was "in a storm". Newspapers favoring the left party featured triumphal headlines for the Center Union - "Center Union for victory" and others favoring the right party had headlines for ERE - "ERE announces a victory schedule". Movie houses played Kostas Voutsas' movie "A bridegroom from London" ("Gampros ap' to Londino") and Pasolini's "Matthew". Followers of Olympiakos (note: football team) used ice on lumps caused by the police during the match with Pierikos, celebrating at the same time their lead in the league, scoring five points more than AEK. On the other hand, Panathinaikos followers were trying to recover from yet another draw with PAOK in their home field. Despite all that, "young shake maniacs" were ignorant of all the rest, waking up to live the best or at least the most intense day of their lives.

And the roller coaster was coming to its end. Starting with Bill Wyman, accompanied by his then girlfriend Astrid and his son Stephen with his previous wife, Diane, the five Stones reached Athens in separate flights and checked in the Hilton hotel. In the evening, and while Brian Jones was sleeping, they gave the usual and obligatory press conference. When asked "What do you know about Shakespeare", Jagger, who was the only talkative, answered "And what do you know about Homer?". He later stated he "had nothing to do with drugs" and the rest of the conference went on in an ... easy listening pace.

If you didn't have that look [long hair and fancy clothes, yellow taffeta pants, red carnations etc.] do you think you would still be as successful as you are now?

- Probably. We've always looked like this.

What's your opinion on the songs you play and your music?

- Our songs express our times. We are not hysterical, contrary to what people think, but elders cannot understand us.

What do you think of the Beatles?

- We love them very much.

What occupies your free time?

- Girls.

Do you love each other?

- Yes. The proof is that we all sleep in the same bed.

But Wyman is married. What does his wife have to say about this?

- She sleeps with us too.

While the Stones were answering the questions of Greek journalists and at around seven o'clock in the evening, the first groups of fans started gathering at the Alexandra avenue stadium. Rain was pouring from early in the morning. Policemen had surrounded the stadium and would not let anyone without a ticket come close. The farsighted fans (those who had in time purchased the magic piece of paper that would allow them to enter) and the brave ones (those who defied the terrible weather and the exaggerating state zeal for law and order) did not exceed the number of seven thousand people.

Only a few minutes past seven Loubogg came on stage, being the first Greek support band. "They played and sung very joyfully, managing to enthuse spectators from the beginning of the show". After Loubogg, came M.G.C. "marked by beautifully rhythms, conservative looks and correct song performance," the "always well-rehearsed Idols", Tasos Papastamatis who "spread chills of emotion and enthusiasm to his fans", Dakis whose "sweet voice was another pleasant contribution to the whole artistic performance" and We Five who "had a pleasant sound, correct vocals and a great selection of songs. The highlight of the first part was the appearance of Guidone and his band. The fascinating show and the joyful songs amazed young and old ones all alike". It is certain that the crowd's enthusiasm was not attributed all to the amazing Italian musician.

Rain had stopped, it was 21.30 and the Stones were entering the stadium's locker rooms, escorted by police. Following the necessary drinks - vodka with orange juice for Jagger, coffee for Wyman etc. etc. - the "five yeah-yeah demigods" appeared in front of the lucky-unlucky Athenian crowd. "The sky was lit with fireworks and the hysterical and inarticulate cries of the capital's yeah-yeah's could be heard many miles away from the stadium". Police was of course unhappy with these manifestations. The orders received were clear: anyone who yells, stands up from his/her seat or dances must be brought back to order at once. "The stage was placed in the middle of the field. Spectators sitting on the tiers and unable to enter the field, were very far away. Police squads had surrounded the stage. The whole feeling was very reminiscent of Poland as the police were trying to shut off any sparkle of enthusiasm, often with useless violent attacks".

Used to playing under similar circumstances, the Stones started their set powerfully with the "Last Time". They played "Lady Jane" with Brian Jones on dulcimer, then "19th Nervous Breakdown" (ideal for the situation) and two of their latest songs, "Ruby Tuesday" and "Let's Spend The Night Together". Mayhem happened in "Satisfaction". Jagger had the idea to give red carnations to the fans, thus making a symbolic and enjoyably provocative movement. But since he could not walk himself the distance between the stage and the tiers, he asked the group's road manager Tom Keylock to do it instead of him. Keylock, who had broken his arm three days ago while trying to protect Jagger from a fan attack during the band's concert in Zurich, took the flowers and ran to the tiers. Immediately six policemen fell over and started beating him. The five Stones, carrying their guitars, rushed over to help him. Hell broken loose. The concert was abruptly ended and the band returned to the locker rooms. "For five minutes, berserk yeah-yeah's were screaming, disapproving the action of Mr. Tasigiorgos, until an order was given to turn off the stadium lights, making it pitch dark and forcing fans to leave. Small groups continued dancing on Alexandra Avenue, but there were no serious incidents". Jagger and company returned to Hilton, unable to understand why any of this had happened. Frustrated and let down, they could not wait to leave Greece.

Stu between Brian and Mick

Next day, and while Athens was celebrating the Queen Mother's birthday, yet another problem awaited the Stones at the airport. Following hours of inspections and checks, Jagger and Watts did manage to take the flight to London and Jones flew off to Munich in order to meet Anita Pallenberg and attend the premier of movie "Mord und Totschlag" for which Brian had written the score. Richards was the one afflicted most by this whole procedure. Looking more suspicious than the others, he had to go through so many inspections by policemen and custom officers that he finally missed his flight and had to ask Keylock to drive him to Munich. Wyman, along with Astrid and his son, decided to stay in Athens a few days longer and the three of them checked in Asteras, Vouliagmeni.

On the 19th, the new issue of Modern Vibes was out featuring a poster of the Who and two announcements for the concerts of the Animals and Kinks, who were to play in the summer and autumn, in Athens and Thessalonica correspondingly (Note: these two concerts never took place in the end). The magazine featured no review whatsoever of the Rolling Stones' gig, due to time limitations, but it had a promise: "Modern Vibes will feature a full report on this great artistic event on their next issue". Very few knew what was to happen until then.

The holidays of unsuspected Wyman were ended "two days later by the sounds of shooting... I called the office of the Greek organizer and was informed that the army had seized state buildings. I was told that at six o' clock in the afternoon curfew would be imposed and that I should in no case leave my apartment after six. I had no contact with the outer world and could not communicate with the Stones' office, neither by phone nor by telegram or letter. We had to wait for the situation to clear out and the airport to start running again... We were finally told by the organizers that we could leave on Sunday April 23rd, and that the army coup had ended".

With a one-week delay, semimonthly magazine Modern Vibes came out again on May 10, holding a surprise for its readers. There was not one word for the Stones, "because so much has been written about this band in the daily and periodic Press". Mr. Mastorakis preferred - "although this page never deals with political issues" - to comment on the new status quo. "The days went by offered to this troubled country the peace and stability it needed. Today's young people will be talking to their children about April 21st..." He did not forget to separate Greeks from foreign "teenagers", or, more correctly, to separate his position from ... what used to be his position only a short three weeks ago... "Teenagers and readers of Modern Vibes have nothing to do with "wild" youngsters of "wild times", they have nothing to do with the Beatniks, nothing to do with all the unbarbered and dirty London youngsters who visit our countries as tourists, they have nothing to do with teddy-boys, ill-bred and uneducated audacious youngsters".

On the same day this issue of Modern Vibes came out, the two unbarbered, dirty and audacious London youngsters, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, were going under trial, regarding the drug case. There were only three weeks remaining before the official initiation of the Summer of Love. Full of prosecutions, arrests and imprisonments, it was the worst summer in the history of the Stones and one of the seven shady summers in the history of our country. The next concert the Rolling Stones would give would be at the Hyde Park. A tribute to Brian Jones...