

The Music Never Stops: The Grateful Dead's 100 Essential Songs is Deadhead essential reading



“What was I thinking?” The first words out of my mouth after offering to review this hot-off-the-press book -*The Grateful Dead's 100 Essential Songs: The Music Never Stops*. With limited knowledge and listening experience of the band to ride on (there are only two Dead songs I know - “Truckin” and “Friend of the Devil”), I delved into “The Black Muddy River.”

Co-author Barry Barnes, who taped more than 200 Dead shows since his first in Des Moines, Iowa, on June 16, 1974, admits that being a Deadhead has been “a long strange trip.” As a child, he tried his hand at music instruction (piano and trumpet), but claims to be more of a “passionate listener.” Early appreciation of the Dead started in the '70s when he was a DJ on an FM rock station in Kansas City and owner of a record store. As his love of the Dead grew deeper, he learned that not only was this dance band improvisational with their music, but also in their approach to music-as-business. This observation led him to quit his jobs, go back to school, earn a PhD in business and study the band's incredibly successful business strategy. His passion for business theory and the Dead led him to write the book - *Everything I Know about Business I Learned from the Dead: The Ten Most Innovative Lessons from a Long Strange Trip* (2001).

Co-author Bob Trudeau grew up in a household full of music. After trying his hand at piano early on, he too proclaims to be more of a listener. He followed the early careers of Buffy Sainte-Marie and Taj Mahal until 1971 when, as he says, “The Dead made a sudden and powerful leap into my life.” He was hooked immediately. After college, and a Peace Corp tour in Honduras with wife, Pat, Trudeau went on to earn his PhD in political science, and in 1970 started a long-tenured career as a professor at Providence College. His love of the Dead never waned, and his interest in the Dead's bass player, Phil Lesh, led Trudeau to learn to play bass. He even sat in occasionally with a Dead band when he lived in Athens, Georgia. He continued to explore the phenomena of the Dead, but it wasn't until 12 years after their last performance, and his attendance at an Unbroken Chain Conference in 2007, that his serious

study and scholarly analysis of the Dead began.

Both authors agree they might not know as much as others who have studied the Dead, yet they felt compelled to share their experiences with lifelong fans and curious newbies. Their hope is that their contribution will help folks gain a deeper understanding of the music and its place in history.

The authors chose their “100 personal best” – songs they feel capture the band’s 30-year, cross-musical genre journey. The book is full of stats and figures – it has been said that there is more statistical information about the Dead than anything else in the world except baseball. Dedicated Deadheads who are into concert statistics and have complete knowledge of the band’s history and players will thoroughly enjoy reading cover to cover – from “Alabama Getaway” to “The Wheel.” Yet, this book is designed as a go-at-your-own-pace interactive guide – great for the seasoned Deadhead and newbies alike.