

SPIRAL LIGHT 25

THE Grateful Dead Magazine

IN THIS ISSUE:

**PHIL LESH INTERVIEW, STUDIO OUT-TAKES '66-89.
D.A.T. TAPING, SHOW REVIEWS + MUCH MORE.**



SPIRAL LIGHT - THE GRATEFUL DEAD MAGAZINE.

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FEATURES

9. DAT's Life - D.A.T. Taping.
10. Cold Dead Hands - An interview with Phil Lesh.
22. Peggy's Problem Page.
24. Still Dead In Their Boots - CD Bootleg guide. Part II.
26. Been Here So Long - The Health of the Dead Beast.
35. Just A Song - Studio Out-takes.
42. A Musical Feast - All the latest on the Cosmic Charlies.
44. Lacking In Some Direction? - An endless re-cycling of overly familiar material?

REGULARS

5. Newsview.
13. On The Road Again.
15. Pick Of The Performances.
18. Feedback.
38. Making Trax.
45. Toyne's Tape Column.
46. Dead Letter Office.
50. Black Peter.
54. Classifieds.

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HELP ON THE WAY.

Despite speculation, prior to, and during the '91 New York and Boston runs that the Dead were due to take a six month break from Touring, which was later seemingly reinforced by Jerry in the October '91 Rolling Stone interview, the Dead have confirmed a major Spring Tour for '92. (Details in the Stop Press) There is still no confirmation, at time of writing, of whether (or when) this break will take effect, but the grapevine informs us that the Road Crew is to be laid off from Oct 2nd '92 until Mardi Gras '93, so expect it then. Apparently, said comments by Jerry were *unauthorised* and did not reflect, or take into account plans already in place for the '92 Touring Schedules.

Plans are now well under way for Summer and Fall Tours with a projected nine shows for September at New York's M.S.G. and a further eight at Boston Gardens to follow. Other shows in the offing include three at Cal Expo, three at the Shoreline and three at Las Vegas for the 19th, 20th, and 21st, 23rd 24th and 25th and 29th, 30th and 31st respectively. Summer Tour is expected to take in shows at Buffalo, Albany, Giant's Stadium, RFK, Raleigh, Buckeye Lake, Pittsburgh and Deer Creek. We also hear that Jerry has around 15 or so numbers in a "Jazzy Blues for Allah" mode, not at all like the "Pop" Touch of Grey, to work up.

Spiral Light is hoping to run a further trip to the U.S.A. to catch shows in either Boston or New York. Full details should be available by the July issue. Places are limited and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis, so start saving those pennies now!

* * * * *

A few weeks ago while sorting out my tape index system I chanced upon a show I hadn't played in nearly 6 years. I'd always assumed said show (17.2.79 - Keith and Donna's last, and with a very tasty P.I.T.B. incidentally) to be a highish gen lower quality audience



highish gen lower quality audience dub, but "Hold It!" "Wait A Minute!!" What I'm hearing is a crispy clean SBD dub. Now how did that escape my highly regarded and admired rating system! I wonder how many other shows I have like that. Worse still, will I ever find out?

All of this may seem irrelevant to you, but it does spark one important point: Why do we feel the need to accumulate such large collections of tapes that in all likelihood we will only get to listen to once every 5/6 years?

For the lucky few (or maybe that should be unlucky!) who've managed to build up sizable collections, think of the logistics involved. Even if you find time to play them at the rate of 1 show per day it's gonna take around three years to wade your way through a 2000 tape collection! Add space to store them - weekend trips to D.I.Y. shops for shelving become an almost regular habit - and the sheer cost over the years (personally, I'd be afraid to even start pricing it all up but it's certainly 1000's!!!) and maybe like me you'll start to ask yourself: Why?

Is it the hoarding impulse said to be in all of us? Is it the ego-trip of having "more than you" or having something someone else doesn't? The same way art collectors just have to have that Van Gogh and then proceed to lock it up in a dusty bank vault so that no-one can appreciate it. Crazy eh?!

I'd like to think that it's sheer love of the music that prevails and in 99% of cases I'm sure that it's so.

For instance I wouldn't like to hazard a guess at how many Playin' In The Band's I've heard, probably thousands. But each one is different and each gives different pleasures and I never tire of hearing it, couple that with the buzz from being able to share this music (an inadequate word to describe what the Dead play) with experienced traders and beginners alike and you'll be half-way to understanding why we do it.

Unfortunately there are a few amongst us who would prefer not to share what they deem to be "rare" shows, because: I've taken a lot of time, spent a lot of money and generally made the effort when you haven't. Why should I share it with you who have contributed nothing?

Examples of this attitude have turned up in recent correspondence.

Well people, and you know who you are, let me put you right. The Grateful Dead are a caring sharing band and organisation and we should be prepared to carry that ethic over into our lives. As Jerry has pointed out on more than one occasion "Once we've played it, we're finished with it. It's out there". That means it's out there for everyone, not just you. So, share it around!! Everybody plays in the Heart of Gold Band!!

* * * * *

This issue is something of a milestone for us. Over the years we've seen the rise, fall and rebirth of Spiral Light to the point where we are now Europe's Premier G.D. Publication and there's more than a possibility that we're gonna make some American Retail outlets soon. This has really only been made possible by you the reader and contributor. It's you that provide the impetus for us to carry on doing what we do. We'd like to thank you all for your warm letters and good vibes as we move on to our next 25 issues (# 50 will be July 2000, # 100: Feb 2017. Somehow can't see myself writing the editorial for that one!) You're the people we're gonna be looking to to ensure we make it there. As usual your contributions are required - photographic, written or artwork, the latter two being especially welcome. Artwork for covers must be able to fit into a 7" x 8" rectangle with the horizontal @ 7". And if you're seeing shows stateside this year naturally we'd like you to review them for us - one half A4 page at most per show please.

As most of you will have noticed, print style and format have changed yet again, hopefully for the better, due to the purchase of a new P.C. and Laser Printer with limited DTP facilities, our aging word processor finally giving up it's ghost. At present our command of all this newly acquired technology is not altogether what it should be but over the next 3 to 4 issues we hope to bring significant improvements in format and lay-out, and the imminent arrival of a laser-scanner will enable us to improve things re photographs and artwork. You have not seen the best of Spiral Light yet!!

Apologies go out to everyone for the tardy arrival of # 24. Problems with our printers due to staff shortages meant we were three weeks late in receiving the finished product, so with that in mind, and to make it easier for us to include current set lists and show reviews, it's been decided to push back the publication dates by around one month. With the exception of this issue which should have made the February postout deadline, No's 26 and 27 will be out in late July and November respectively.

The Deadline for articles/advertising etc for # 26 is 15th May. If you need to write to us and want a reply and/or material returned please enclose an S.A.E. or return postage.

Finally, following the untimely demise of a certain Czech newspaper magnate (much revered by Daily Mirror employees) the editorial board would like to assure our readers that the S.L. pension fund is still intact and has not been diverted into offshore euro-tie dye bonds nor squandered in the fleshpots and casinos of Europe. Plans to open the first in a series of Jerry Garcia retirement homes for aging Dead-heads have not been shelved as widely reported, nor have any us been summoned before any Commons Select Committees.

As ever, many thanks are extended to the following: Nick Brown, Hugh Rees, Peter Molloy, Bob Gribbin, Tony Mazurowski, Anne Aubin, Paddy Ladd, Fred Ditmas, Paul Mallett, The Cosmic Charlies (for the best New Year show ever in the U.K.) & Dennis McNally of the G.D.O.

Thanks also go out to everyone who sent us Xmas cards, to those who've made donations to our funds and to all who've paid their subs on time. We're sorry that it's been impossible to reply to everyone personally but your thoughts are much appreciated. Let it grow!!

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8713**

NEWSVIEW.

"If the objective is to leave the world a better place, to have put more love into the world than you take out, then Bill Graham was a huge success" commented Huey Lewis on the death of Bill Graham. I imagine there can be few of you reading this who haven't heard about the death of Bill Graham, on 25th October 1991. Bill had spent the evening venue scouting and had just left Concord Pavilion, in San Francisco's East Bay, after a Huey Lewis concert. The helicopter in which he was flying home, was flying in particularly bad weather conditions and crashed into a 200ft high utility tower. The accident also killed long-time Graham aides, Steve Kahn, pilot, and Bill's assistant Melissa Gold.

A special memorial service was held on the Monday following the accident at San Francisco's Temple Eman-uel. The 1500 congregation included many members of the SF music community over the years as well as Dan Akroyd, Jann Werner, Bill Walton, Tito Puente and Atlantic Records, founder Ahmet Ertegun. In the afternoon a private funeral was held at the Eternal Home Cemetery, where the Eulogy was read by Mickey Hart and Paul Kantner. Bill, who was divorced, is survived by three sons, David, Alex and Thomas, who are fully expected to continue with the running of BGP.

Bills death, received widespread coverage in the media, all of it highly sympathetic. The San Francisco Bay Area, badly hit in recent times by the '89 Earthquake and the '91 Berkeley-Oakland Forest fires, quite plainly felt it had lost one of its own sons, such had been Bill's impact there over the years. "It didn't seem reasonable; Grace Slick commented, "I thought, that's not right. He can't die! It seems like the end of an era. It's not just me getting old"

The Dead, who were due to start 4 BGP Halloween shows two days after Bill's death decided to go ahead with them. "It was painful, but I think Bill would have wanted us to play" said Garcia. "Now we're going to call him Bill the Great" said Bob Weir, responding to the nickname Uncle Bobo that the Dead christened Bill with in the early '80's. The first show at Oakland Coliseum kicked off with **Sugar Magnolia**, Bills professed favourite Dead song.

The Bill Graham memorial concert "Laughter Love and Music", "an exuberant civic celebration that served as a valve for the disaster - wrecked Bay Area" drew approx. 300,000 fans to the city's Golden Gate Park, 3rd November. The event kicked off at 10.00 a.m. on a huge stage backed by the words "Fare you well, Fare you well, We love you more than words can tell". The six hour show featured music by the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Bobby McFerrin, Los Lobos, Santana, Journey, Tracy Chapman, CSN&Y and the Dead who were joined by John Fogarty and Gary Duncan, ex Creedence and Quicksilver, respectively. Actor Robin Williams borrowed from baseball ethics and led the crowd in a roar of "Yo Bill". Concluding the event Joan Baez, Graham Nash and Kris Kristofferson sang an accapella version of **Amazing Grace**. Parts of the concert were shown on both American and English MTV.

The event seemed to capture the spirit of those halcyon '60's Haight-Ashbury days perfectly without even trying, by all reports. Said the "San Jose Mercury" "It was the ultimate happening. A refraction of emotional light passing from tragedy to solemn remembrance to bittersweet nostalgia to something beyond - a huge catharsis" for the Bay Area itself.

Carlos Santana: "He was the great gardener and the Grateful Dead and Santana have deep roots where storms cannot bring us down. We were both nourished and replenished by his philosophy and tenacity. My hearts crushed".

Bob Weir: "He was our Uncle, the guy who was responsible to talk to the rest of the world while were out on the fringe. He was the most important non-musician in the world.. I have faith the people at BGP will follow his traditions and practices. But it won't be the same without him. He made the music business an adventure, he made it fun. Even those in the industry who stand to gain most by Bill's departure will miss him. Nobody has his sense of style and quality".

I'm sure everyone here at SL would agree with Weir's sentiments. Bill will most certainly be missed.

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"We're aiming for six months off the road. I think that would be helpful" Jerry told Rolling Stone magazine 31st October 1991. "I don't know when it will happen, but the point is that we're all talking about it. We're going to get down and do some serious writing, some serious rehearsing or something. We all know that we pretty much don't want to trash the Grateful Dead. But we also know that we need to make some changes".

"We're also going to have to construct new enthusiasm for ourselves, because we're getting a little burned out. We're a little crisp around the edges. So we have to figure out how we are going to make this fun for ourselves. That's our challenge for the moment, and to me the answer is: Let's write a whole bunch of new stuff, and let's thin out the stuff we've been doing. We need a little bit of time to fall back and collect ourselves and rehearse with the new band and come up with some new material that has the band in mind". The band already has some new material ready to roll by all accounts. Widespread word of mouth had the band ready to debut new material during the Fall tour. Alas, none was forthcoming. New songs are thought to include a Hunter-Garcia song **Too Many Roads** and a Hunter-Hart piece **Corinna**. No word on whether **Tough**

Changes aka "Shit Happens" the Hunter-Weir song, that first reared it's head during "Built To Last" rehearsals, will re-appear.

As Garcia says, quite when this "six months off" is likely to happen, is up in the air at present. Some sources indicate that it may not, in fact, happen at all, and that Garcia's comments in Rolling Stone were taken out of context. No word on the state of play has been forthcoming in the months since the interview.

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As I'm sure you're all aware, there is a new Grateful Dead album with us at present "Infra-Red Roses", the long talked about Drums/Space album, was finally released in the US during November and in the UK during January. I think it's fair to say this is a "new" album, albeit not technically being in the mold of "Built To Last" etc. In fact it's like the missing disc from "Without A Net". Whether Arista had an option on this release isn't known. In the US the set was released in the CD digi-pak (fold out form, as opposed to the standard jewel box issue). See reviews in Makin' Trax this issue.

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The second volume of "One From The Vault" series is expected to be released in February 1992, so you could well be listening to it by the time you get around to reading this. Another double CD set, the shows this time will be from August 1968 shows at Fillmore West, SF. and the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles. The first set "One From The Vault" 13/8/75 is said to have now surpassed sales of 100,000 copies. It seems quite likely 1992 will see another pair of releases "from the vaults".

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Solo work from band members has almost been hyper-active since the Dead's fall tour. The JGB undertook one of it's longest tours yet, playing through out the East Coast and Mid-West. In venues usually frequented by the Dead, all 13 shows were virtual sell outs. The band played a number of new cover tunes including **Shining Star** (The Manhattans) **C'est la vie/You Never Can Tell** (Chuck Berry) and **Money Honey** (Clyde McPhatter). In Hampton, VA. the band were also joined by hometown boy Bruce Hornsby.

November saw the release of "Jerry Garcia and David Grisman", an album of acoustic music by the pair. The release follows a handful of live shows by the twosome between February and August. The CD/MC is currently available here only as an import, a UK release being unlikely. A video of the track "The thrill is gone" has been put out as a taster for the album.

Garcia, Hornsby, Branford Marsalis and Rob Wasserman recorded music for a series of "LEVI" ads in the States, directed by Spike Lee. "Yeah, we figured, hey if Spike Lee could sell out, we could sell out. What the hell" said Garcia. Garcia also talked of the same quartet "putting something together" in the future possibly. "I had this notion of putting together a band that had no material, that just got onstage and blew. And maybe one of these days, we'll see that happen". Garcia commented. Well Jerry, how about starting with your part-time band, the Grateful Dead?!

Garcia also appears on the new Ken Nordine CD. Described as an album of "Word-Jazz", "The Devout Catalyst" will be released by Grateful Dead records. The album was recorded at the Dead's Le Club Front Studio and also features Tom Waits and should be released around March this year. Garcia and Bob Weir also both appear on the new Thomas Dolby album. The English singer-songwriter-producers album will be released on EMI early in 1992.

Bob Weir meanwhile has been busy touring with partner Rob Wasserman, currently billing themselves as "Scaring The Children" following on from the Rockin' W's. Wassermans long awaited "Trios" album, featuring Garcia and Weir, should finally see the light of day during 1992. V.I.S.W. Video, have recently issued "Bobby and the Midnites", presumably a live concert, on VHS and PAL, in the states.

Mickey Hart undertook his first nationwide tour. Mickey too has been almost inundated with critical and commercial approval for his recent solo work. Both "At The Edge" and it's recently released companion "Planet Drum" have topped Billboards best selling "New Age" charts "Planet Drum" the book, has also been published by Harpers. "The Planet Drum" tour, some 15 concerts across the States, featured Mickey alongside Baba Olatunji, Sikiru Adepoju, Zakir Hussain, Vikku Vinayakram, Airto Moreira, Flora Purim and Giovanni Hidalgo. The concerts featured the ensemble playing tracks from "Edge" and "Drum". To his credit Mickey didn't use his Dead - association to promote the concerts at all.

Mickey has also scored the TBS (American TV) Special "Mysterious Elephants of the Congo", a one hour "World of Audubon" production, hosted by Jane Fonda. Also, a compilation of Mickey's "The World" series, "Around the World" on Rykodisc RCDD0217/RACS, was released just before Christmas.

Bruce Hornsby, meanwhile, is set for a busy '92. He will have a new album with his band The Range, out at some point, probably with a European tour to follow. He's also producing a new Shawn Colvin LP, as well as working with Mike Gibbs on an orchestration of Hornsby's songs for two symphony concerts in Hampton, VA., and possibly an album of the same. Bruce is also helping out on a new David Crosby solo LP for '92 release.

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New on the book front:- "One More Saturday Night" by Sandy Troy subtitled "Reflections with the Grateful Dead, Dead Family and Deadheads." The self explanatory "Conversations with the Dead" by David Gans (published by Citadel Underground), both of these were reviewed in the last issue. Also "Sunshine Daydream: a Grateful Dead Journal" by photographer Herbie Greene; "Outside the show: a resource guide for Deadheads" by Paul Hoffman and Cindy Cargrove - enquiries to Unbroken Chain, P.O.Box 8726, Richmond, VA 23226, USA; "Aces back to back" - "the most detailed account of the Dead and their history by Scott Allen (Relix columnist) enquiries to Aces, Inc., P.O. Box 95, Armonk, NY 10504 NY. Robert Hunter has a new collection of poetry "Night Cadre" published by Viking Press. Although not seen yet, Celestial Arts Press were expecting to publish, prior to Christmas, a collection of paintings and drawings by Jerry Garcia. Bob and Wendy Weir's "Panther Dreams" is published by Disneys Hyperion book division, as is the accompanying cassette of Weir narrating the story. "The Aesthetics of the Grateful Dead by David Womack (Flying Public Press) - FPP, P.O. Box 112, Palo Alto, CA 94301, USA. for UK availability check with Virgin and Compendium Books, in London.

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Tom Constanten, the Dead's only living ex-keyboard player, has just published his autobiography. "Between Rock and Hard Places: A musical Autobiodysey". is published by Hulogosi Books of Eugene, Oregon. Hulogosi have published a number of Dead related works over the last three years including Hunters "Duino Elegies" book and accompanying tape with Hunter reading to music by T.C. This Spring will also see the release of a T.C. solo LP by Relix records. The album will feature a version of **Dark Star** with guest Henry Kaiser, as well as covers of **Friend of the Devil**, **Whiter Shade of Pale** and **Boris The Spider**.

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On the video front, the long out of print "Dead Ahead", should be reactivated on CDV during 1992. Also forthcoming is said to be a multi-volume achival video on CDV interactive video. Len Dell'Amico is now in charge of the Deads film/video archives in San Rafael "We'll eventually release everything any Deadhead will ever need to see, we have it all". Expect further '92 Dead shows to appear on pay-per view Cable TV.

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Ken Kesey appeared at the 1991 Summer Stage shows in New York's Central Park. Kesey read extracts from "Demon Box" and other unpublished works with great wit and poignancy. Taking the stage to the accompaniment of **Dark Star** from "Live Dead", Kesey finished his reading with an audience singalong of **Truckin'**, whilst the "Europe '72" version of that song was played over the PA at shows end.

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On the cover versions front, folk-blues singer Chris Smithers covers **Friend Of the Devil** on his "Another Way To Find You" LP on Flying Fish records. Hailing from Boston, MA, Smithers is best known for having two of his songs **Love You Like A Man** and **I Feel The Same** covered by Bonnie Raitt.

Metal/Thrash band Metallica, however, take a page out of the Dead's touring manual. The bands current American tour will feature a "taper section" behind the soundboard at each show, for audio and video taping. One of Bill Grahams last productions, before his death, at Oakland Colisium, was a Metallica show. On the headbanging throng he commented "Theres something going out there and I'm not sure I understand it a certain anger a real anger. I look at them and wonder if they have a right to be so angry at such a young age".

"But the youth may know something about life that we didn't know at that age maybe they've got toughness that we didn't have Wouldn't it be something if we see some of the changes in the '90's that we dreamed about in the '60's."

"Are they made from rhubarb? Is it true they don't give you a hangover? Do organic wine-makers wear loom pants and play Grateful Dead albums to their vines?" asked the latest Oddbins catalogue:

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Sky Movies screened the film "When you remember me" (4/12/91) about a young lad with a terminal illness who wants to go see a Dead show. The lad gets his wish and the film includes live footage from a show. Anyone see this?

No doubt most of you caught the Dead on BBC2's "Sounds of the Sixties" (23/11/91), also "The San Francisco Sound presented by Casey Kasem" available on video too, (29/12/91), whilst a "Blues For Allah" T-shirt turned up in BBC1's movie "The Great Outdoors" (27/12/91) featuring Dan Akroyd and John Candy.

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Yes, the rumours are true. America's premier GD fanzine Golden Road is coming back. GR is all set to put out a big double issue in late February/early March. It's going to be 100 pages of the good stuff you've come to expect. The plan right now is do just the one issue in 1992 and possibly one in 1993. Cost outside of the United States is \$10.00 payable to: The Golden Road, 484 Lake Park Avenue #82, Oakland, CA. 94610, U.S.A.

RICHARD LEE. (With thanks to Hugh Rees).

SOUNDBITES

"Here we are, we're getting into our fifties, and where are these people who keep coming to our shows coming from? What do they find so fascinating about these middle-aged bastards playing basically the same thing we've always played? I mean, what do seventeen year olds find fascinating about this?"

Garcia, November '91. Rolling Stone Interview.

"Someone once wrote that we're a real cheap vacation to Bermuda, which is kind of right".

Garcia. New York Times 9/9/91

"Right, I'll go further out now. Nobody will follow me to this one: the Grateful Dead, you know, this music almost nobody can dig".

Elvis Costello, on searching for esoteric music in 1970. Feb 1991 Muscian.

"I was just knocked out. It was like somebody sent me chocolates, roses and a Jaguar all at once..... It was just such a pleasure to hear someone else do the material, and to feel that the material did have an independent existence. It validated it.

Boston Globe 20/9/91 Robert Hunters' thoughts on the "Dedicated" compilation.

"The nod comes at any time. You never know. It doesn't happen at the same time in every song, or necessarily ever in the same song again. So you don't have preconceived notions of what to play, and you just do it for better or worse. Maybe they'll be laying back, so you might play a big synth solo; or maybe play something in half-time, so it doesn't sound so busy. Knowing when not to play is the biggest challenge".

"The Dead are like a cross between a Dixieland band and a progressive jazz-band, blues band, country band and folk band. Kind of folkie -country -bluesy - jazzy - progressive - avant garde".

Vince Welnick. Boston Globe 15/9/91

"I think an immediate search of the Lady Ghislaine should be made for Grateful Dead albums, tie-dyed bow ties and Blue Star tattoos".

Andy Dingley, c/o Computer Information Exchange, Surbiton, Surrey.

"There's something very Boy Scout-ish about it. It's also like an inverse "Lord Of The Flies" - these school boys are marooned on an island and have to fend for themselves. They've become this kind of ramshackle, pioneering, fending - for - themselves bunch, but in this case they turn to peace and love as opposed to violence and crime. Is that terribly off the mark?"

David Bowie on the Grateful Dead

DAT'S LIFE

WANT TO KNOW WHY YOUR NAKAMICHI DECKS ARE SOON GONNA BE OBSOLETE? ELSPETH CUSACK AND PHILIP WILLIAMS EXPLORE THE REASONS WHY.

The high quality of recording possible with digital technology is revolutionising the taping scene. A taper friend of ours estimates that one tape deck in three at an average Grateful Dead concert is now a DAT (digital audio tape) deck.

Digital recordings of shows are not new - there has been a small scale tape trading scene in the USA for some years, based on digital audio recording on videotape, using PCM (pulse code modulation). But video tapes are bulky, and the recording equipment is not easily transported. Portable DAT decks on the other hand, from the Sony D3 DAT (costing around £500) up to professional field recording decks at twice the price, are small and light. DAT tapes are half the size of analogue cassettes and look like miniature videotapes. Like video tapes, the heads on a DAT deck spin very fast in a helical pattern. This gives a high relative speed on tape over the heads, allowing many bits (that is, a lot of digital signal) per second. It is this density of information that makes DAT such a wonderful recording medium, with high signal to noise ratio and dynamic range. Every nuance of a Grateful Dead performance can be faithfully captured on DAT audience tapes which sound better than CDs. The standard DAT tape lengths are 90 and 120 minutes, which affords the luxury of uncut recordings of both sets of a Dead show - this is a big plus for fans of Drums and Space, so often butchered on analogue tapes. On the minus side, DAT tapes are about three times as expensive as analogue tapes.

Digital recordings are simply strings of "0's" and "1's" which can be directly copied, making the concept of generations irrelevant. The professional decks used by most DAT tapers do not use the SCMS (serial copy management system) coding that prevents more than one digital > digital copy being made on a domestic DAT deck. (SCMS is intended to prevent pirate DAT distribution of CDs) This means that DAT trading exists at the high-end of US tape trading - though price considerations mean that DAT collectors tend to be pickier about exactly which shows they archive. In the last two years or so soundboard masters of selected shows from the vaults have been appearing in digital formats, so the possibility of upgrading your favourite Canter-Jackson soundboards to very low generation analogue dubs via digital copying is now a reality.

Whatever the tape format, the quality and alignment of microphones is crucial to the quality of an audience recording. A DAT deck on its own is not enough to produce the perfect audience tape. Luckily many of the tapers using DAT equipment are proficient sound engineers able to get remarkable results either by buying or patching into the best mics they can find. First-time recipients of first generation analogue copies of DAT audience tapes have been known to believe they were listening to soundboards, ignoring the tape label!

So, should Deadheads who can afford it be rushing out to buy DAT decks? In America, this is already beginning to happen. Domestic DAT decks start at about £500, the same sort of price as, say, a Nakamichi analogue cassette deck. It is much easier to persuade a taper to make a DAT copy of a show than an analogue, as no tape flipping is required. It is also widely observed that people who have heard the Dead on DAT find it difficult to remain satisfied with analogue tapes!

Some people think that they should wait for the DCC (digital compact cassette) format promised to be available soon from Philips. However, DCC is aimed at the mass domestic consumer market and depends on non-reversible data compression techniques. This means that DCC recordings will use far fewer bits per second, selectively discarding some of the sound information available. So DCC recordings may sound clean, but they will be less faithful than DAT recordings. DCC will also stick to the 45 minute per side format of analogue cassettes. The much-heralded compatibility of DCC decks with analogue tapes is a red herring for Deadheads, as anyone collecting Dead tapes presumably already has a good analogue cassette deck. Finally, I don't know of any tapers waiting to convert to DCC - though the advent of recordable CDs is eagerly awaited in some optimistic quarters!

On this side of the pond, the opportunities to obtain shows on DAT are limited but do exist. If you find someone with DAT tapes, then you have a potential source of excellent first-generation analogue copies. In the meantime, look out for tapes labelled as "DAT audience" - the chances are they will turn out to be amongst your cleanest and most realistic tapes.

PL: I think that's the way it is in nature, or on human endeavour generally. It's like the cycle of growth, decline, and fall. The classic situation. It's ... I don't know ... it seems common enough that that does happen. Perhaps the further you are from the centre of the original impulse, the weaker the message is. But at the same time, many many people in the original scene ended up in business. In fact we're in business now. We employ 50 people at the moment. We're responsible for those people. If anything happened to us, they'd all be out of a job. In a way, it's an inescapable consequence of staying together and continuing to develop. For us, it's been a series of cycles.

AB: Why do you keep going? Why does the band keep going? You might want to go on playing music and all that.

PL: Well, there's the real gut-level down in the dirt reason of we don't want to have to go out and get jobs.

AB: Would you ever need to work again if you didn't get a job?

PL: Oh yeah, yeah. We never made any amount of money that goes beyond.. that was anything more than survival, just paying the rent, until 1987, 1988, actually, if you want to think of the year the money started coming in. So it's not like we've been making big money that long, and have got enough dough in the bank to buy a couple of small countries. It's not like the Rolling Stones who get, what is it, 15 million each in their pocket before they even start. Not like that at all. So there's that level. I don't particularly want to go out to work, get another job, and the other guys in the band feel pretty much that way. But then there's the .. the main sense of it is that we're not finished yet. We're not finished yet; we haven't done it: we haven't played everything we could play, we haven't explored the material that we have, deeply enough; we haven't created the material that's going to take us over the top. We know that we can do that if we just keep at it long enough. Or we hope that we can do it if we keep at it long enough. We're not going to quit until they take the guitars from our cold dead hands.

AB: Why does the band as a whole write so few songs?

PL: Writing songs is hard. Songs are a particular area of music which is one of the most difficult to deal with, mostly because of words.

AB: But you have two full-time lyricists!

PL: This is true. This is true. And not everything they write is suitable to be sung. My particular problem is that I have a lot of trouble with singing anything that doesn't mean something to me, although I will sing certain Rock 'n' Roll songs or something like that for fun. I sing Tom Thumb's Blues because I've always loved that song. But if I'm going to write a song: If I have to sing a song that's by me, that's not somebody else's song, then I really have to be .. it has to be in my bones, and there's very little that gets there. I'm just that difficult. I'm a difficult man. As for the other guys .. I know that songwriting is not something that anyone just tosses off. Nobody does that. I can only conclude that everyone feels the same as I do: that it's bloody hard, and you've really got to mean it. The ones that we do have we're still working on trying to break them open: to tear them

WE'RE NOT GOING TO QUIT UNTIL THEY TAKE THE GUITARS FROM OUR COLD DEAD HANDS !

down and put them together in another way, so .. that's one of the things we do.

AB: You really feel you can still do that with a song like the Scarlet Begonias Fire On The Mountain thing that you did last night?

PL: Well, if we're performing well, we can break it open right in the middle of it, and we do that. But it has to start right, and it has to go right up until that point. And even then it might not happen. But then it might, if somebody has the right idea: if someone is, dare I say it, inspired.

AB: There are out there, those people taping it: you could probably put together, out of the tapes in free circulation, about 5 or 6 stupefyingly good Grateful Dead records.

PL: Yeah. We're going to do that, as a matter of fact. We've got all those tapes at home as well. It's not just the people out there who have them. So we are planning to do something of that nature in the very near future.

AB: Why haven't you done it? Is it a deliberate decision? Is it part of the aesthetic of splintering things up?

PL: Yes and no. Because, as long as we let the people tape it, it's out there anyway. It's the matter of an editorial decision on our part, to decide what's good and what isn't, and no one's been willing to take the time, until now, to sit back and listen to all that shit.

Because we, essentially, feel that once we've played it, it's out there. If we're like recording multi-track for a live album, that's a different situation. But we're planning to go through our archives, either in collaboration with our record company or through our own merchandising arm. We aim to release some of that material.

AB: I seem to have run out of sensible questions. (laughter) As you know better than me, interviews are a complete waste of time, unless there's some degree of spontaneity. They sell records, but that's not really the business that I'm in, or you're in.

PL: I know that's not why you're here, either. AB: The question that I've always wanted to get an answer to .. do you really think there's a different aesthetic that you're operating to. (This sounds desperately pretentious) Are you doing something genuinely new, or do you see yourselves as about the same sort of business as musicians before you?

PL: Music has a certain continuity to it, throughout the history of western music, anyway. It started out as church music; and I believe, in the sense that we .. one of our original sayings was "every place we play is church". And in that sense, we feel a kind of continuity with that tradition: music is raising consciousness, as well, of course, as being enter-

SEARCHLIGHT CASTING IN N.W.5.

BRITISH DEADHEADS FIRST NEW YEAR'S EVE SHOW!! DANCING DAVE SMITH TELLS ALL YOU NON-ATTENDEES EXACTLY WHAT YOU MISSED!

SET 1: Scarlet Begonias > Touch Of Grey > Fire On The Mountain; Black Throated Wind; Queen Jake; Chinatown Shuffle; Me & My Uncle > Big River; Crazy Fingers; Eyes Of The World; The Promised Land.

SET 2: In The Midnight Hour; Brown Eyed Women; Minglewood Blues; Playing In The Band > Drums > Space > Tomorrow Never Knows > Let It Grow jam > Playing reprise; Dark Star > Stella Blue; Deal.

ENCS: Cosmic Charlie; China Cat Sunflower > I Know You Rider.

All Gods children gotta have music, and music de-luxe is what we had at the Park Royal for New Year. F**k art, let's dance - yeah, I'll go for that - couldn't get to Oakland so I went to N.W.5. and boy, did I do the right thing. Many many highlights, a night at the (cosmic) opera, forever etched onto the few remaining brain cells. A first set from Nick Cox accompanying himself on electric piano. He ran the gauntlet of emotions from **Tangled Up In Blue** to **China Cat > Rider** via **Cassidy** and a bubbling **Box Of Rain**. Very much appreciated and a cool way to start this feast of festive fun and games.

Hall decorations courtesy of various Spiral Light members - cheap but tasty (our motto - "We Try") - backdrop courtesy of Bob, and music by way of Heaven. So many high spots - a grooving **Touch** - a nervous **Fire** - a sublime **Black Throated Wind** here, a rockin' **Me And My Big River** there and, OH BOY!!, that wonderful wonderful **Eyes** that took us to a higher level - great jam, a bass solo and did I hear a **Help On The Way** jam at the end? What a way to arrive at the **Promised land**.

Big Ben chimes in the **Midnight hour** and the journey across the galaxy starts here - a **Playing** constructed from musical Lego - real building block music - geometric sounds - a faultless **Drumz** (Bob, Andy, Brian and son Patrick), plenty of that "weird shit" leading into a drum-less **Tomorrow** before exploding into an instrumental **Let It Grow** jam that took us full circle to the **Playing** theme.

Before we can recover we're tumbling headlong into the black hole of **Dark Star** where we wander around lost in the maelstrom of sound and mirrors of shapes that these guys create - who wants to be found anyway? Before we know it **Stella** settles over us and it's a mellow end to the set. Not a lowdown or comedown but a gentle lowering of the tempo (rature) - spacious and a delicate indigo blue.

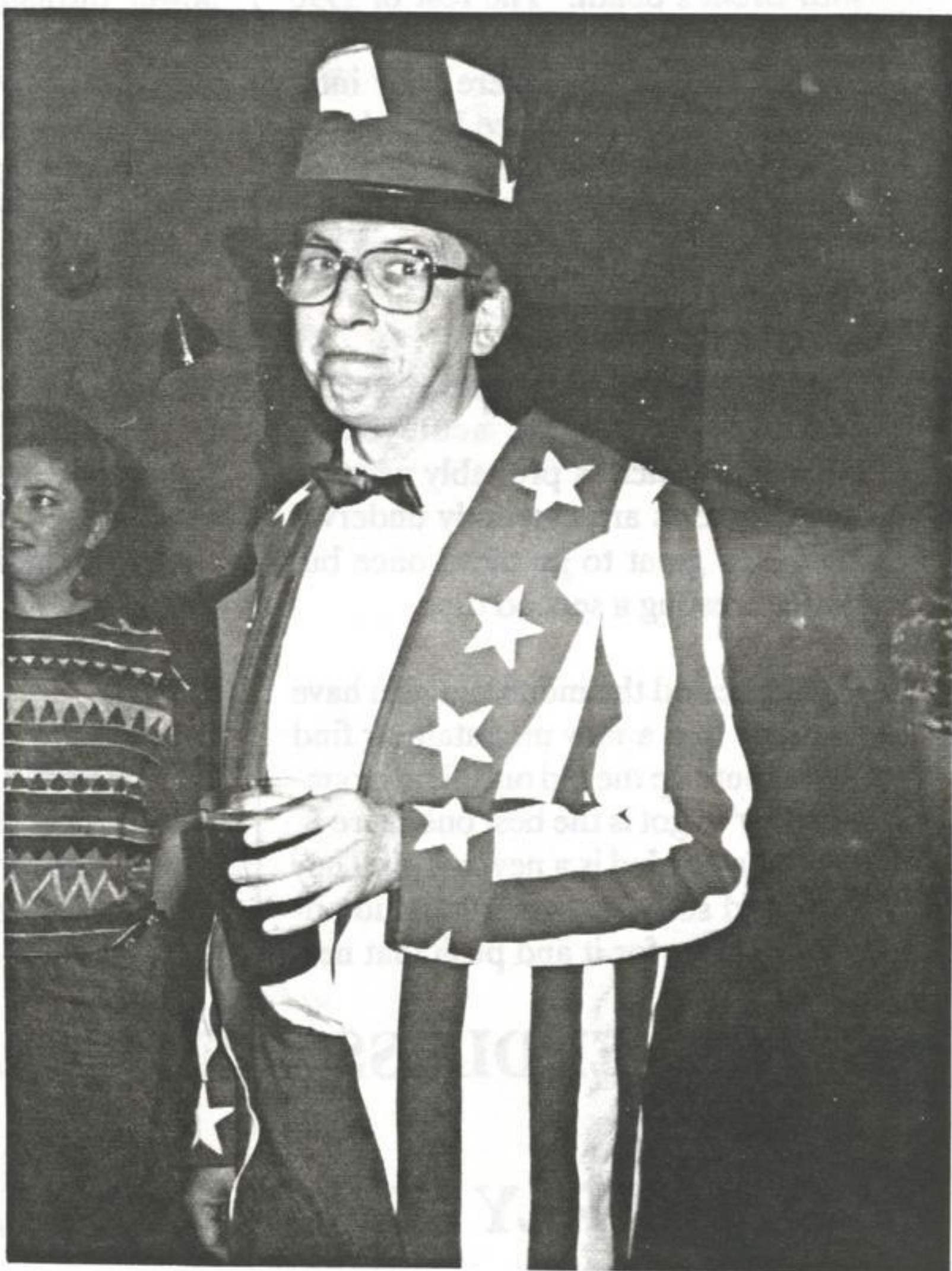
Deal hands us a royal flush of Rock'n'Roll and **Cosmic Charlie** sounds as if it was written for these boys. At just turned 1.30 in the morning of the new year it's a killer **China Cat > Rider** to say goodnight - and this is how it should be - fast and furious. Never have so many owed so much etc. etc., You know the story. If you haven't seen this band you have to - you owe it to yourself.

All I can say to close is full marks to everyone who helped make this a fitting end to the year - the audience, the landlord and landlady, the staff at the Park Royal, and not forgetting of course TDK tapes. Lastly our thanks to the wonderful bunch who made all of this possible - the band themselves - so Brian, Ian, Mick, Steve, Andy and Bob, take a bow and give yourselves a big big hand - you guys deserve it, and we love you for it.

AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE COSMIC CHARLIES

The Cosmic Charlies would like to thank Spiral Light, S.L. Subscribers and others who have supported us so far in making our gigs a success. There is an obvious need for a band such as ours to exist in order to further the cause of Dead related music. However, to exist we need your continued support. We are fully aware of the distances some of you are having to travel to attend our gigs and as a result we are willing to travel to you. For this to happen we need your help. This means YOU. We would like to hear from anybody who could assist in arranging gigs. For further details contact:-

Ian 081 598 8713 Brian 0708 863032 Rob & Maggie 0494 726290



Photographs: Lorraine Smith.