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4000 WARNER BLVD., BURBANK, CALIFORNIA



## THE GRATEFUL DEAD - VERSION 1

Lead guitarist, Jerry Garcia, known to San Franciscans as "Captain Trips" because of the excursion boats he once piloted up the Sacramento River, was born in Mazatlan, Mexico, of Spanish noble parents. They fled their native country during the Civil War after their nutmeg plantation was burned and looted. But soon after Jerry's birth, they were assassinated in an obscure Chilean coup attempt, and he was left to be raised by a wizened old Hopi lady, assisted by a pack of wolves, who immediately accepted the little Garcia as one of their own. Many acute listeners have identified, in Garcia's far-out solo runs, evocations of long-remembered Hopi chants. Jerry spoke no English until 1957, when he moved into San Francisco's Hopi colony. A graduate of the San Francisco Academy of Stringed Instruments, he began his rock 'n' roll career doodling along with the radio on the Thresher, the converted mine-sweeper with which he took weekly tourist excursions between Stockton and Oakland. Now he belongs to the ages.

Bass player, Phil Lesh, was well-known to two generations of American youngsters as the loveable Miss Frances of "Ding Dong School." Lesh's remarkable ability at characterizations was further demonstrated in 1960, when he campaigned for the Presidency in several states under the name of Richard Nixon. Lesh grew up on a nutmeg plantation in southwest Louisiana, and his interest in music stemmed from his childhood habit of humming musical radio commercials to himself as he worked in the fetid bayous. However, Phil later received classical musical training, and he spent two years as featured singer with the San Francisco Opera, handling such varied roles as the leads in Aida and Falstaff. Entering rock 'n' roll because of the social stigma attached to operatic performers in this country, Lesh quickly established himself as the outstanding big-beat interpreter of the songs of Stephen Foster. In his non-performing moments, Phil sculpts miniature figurines of major San Francisco political figures, a common pastime of the city's "hippies."

Ron (Pig Pen) McKernan, organist and harpist, enjoyed several successful years as leader of an all-organ blues band before joining the "Dead." Born and raised in Palo Alto, California, McKernan earned his nickname while in high school. In his senior year, for a biology

project, Ron shared his room with several young porkers, subjecting them to unusually intense study, and eventually turning out a research paper on "The Habits Of Pigs." (He got an A). Flunking out of the nearby San Francisco Academy of Pedaled Instruments on grounds of dirt, McKernan took a job as a shipping clerk in an Oakland nutmeg works, where the songs shouted by the workers along the noisy assembly line gave him his obvious feeling for urban blues. Then, for several years, Ron was organist for several of radio's top soap operas (careful listeners can detect that he sneaks the "Guiding Light" theme into every solo).

Percussionist, Bill Sommers, began his lifelong fascination with rhythm as a poor, but honest, newsboy on the streets of San Francisco. In order to stimulate sales, he cried out the headlines in rhythmical sing-song, devising little tap-dance steps to attract further attention. This procedure was so effective (during the famous circulation war, the Chronicle and Examiner continually attempted to outbid each other for his services) that Sommers kept the job all the way through college, paying for his tuition and investing in several small dormitories on the side. Hanging up his dancing shoes forever, Sommers joined the Jug City Trombone Ramblers, a local band, and introduced the novel approach of using jugs as percussion instruments. His rapid-fire technique, however, soon broke every jug the Ramblers owned, and Sommers quickly turned to a part-time job as a door-to-door nutmeg salesman until he was invited to join the "Dead." The rest, of course, is history.

Bob Weir is the scion, or son, of a socially prominent family on the San Francisco peninsula. Expected by his parents to become a doctor, Bob maintained the fiction that he was going through medical school while secretly sitting in on guitar with big-name dance bands traveling through San Francisco. Only 18 years old, he is, nonetheless, the youngest rhythm guitarist ever to play with the "Dead." Weir still manages to convince his parents that he is, in fact, a doctor, by subscribing to medical journals and stuffing his hair under a surgical cap whenever they visit. The most literary of the "Dead," Weir has to his credit two books documenting Communist influence in rock 'n' roll music, and a collection of poems and drawings about the Russo-Japanese War. It is Weir's drawing of McKernan that appears on the thousands of "Pigpen" t-shirts being worn by San Franciscans, one of hundreds of sketches and photos of McKernan that hang in Weir's room. No one has yet asked why. It is, by now, well established that Weir invented the word "hippie."