



The SIXTIES

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Saturday, December 5, 2009

[Relix, the Book: The Grateful Dead Experience](#)

Book Review:

Relix, the Book: The Grateful Dead Experience Compiled by Toni Brown

<http://blogcritics.org/books/article/book-review-relix-the-book-the/>

Author: El Bicho

Nov 26, 2009

While it will only be of interest to Deadheads and like-minded folk, Relix, the Book is an impressive testament to the devotion and community created by fans of the Grateful Dead. Their relationship with the band, the music, and each other helped create a different business model many new bands now use.

Because of the Grateful Dead's acceptance and encouragement of not-for-profit bootleggers, Les Kippel founded the First Free Underground Grateful Dead Tape Exchange where fans traded concerts. After he was featured in a Rolling Stone article entitled "Mr. Tapes of Brooklyn," Kippel was overwhelmed by the demand, so in 1974 he started a newsletter entitled Dead Relix featuring news about the band and info about trading bootlegs. Since then, Relix has expanded operations. The newsletter is now a magazine with an online presence and there is also a music label.

Compiler Toni Brown went to her first Dead show in 1969, in the late '70s she met Kippel, whom she later married, and worked for the magazine and related businesses. She provides notes of additional information throughout the book.

The newsletter started out with articles and crude drawings. They gained access to the band and other musicians and began running interviews. A 1975 letter from Dick Latvala is featured, who Deadheads will know as the man behind Dick's Picks.

Relix covered other bands from the San Francisco scene such as Jefferson Airplane and Dan Hicks and readers didn't seem to mind. In 1978, editor Jerry Moore left and Jeff Tamarkin came in. Tamarkin widened the music covered to artists like Bruce Springsteen, Stevie Ray Vaughn and the Cars. In 1982, Tamarkin moved on and Brown took over.


After back-to-back covers featuring Ozzy Osbourne and Joan Jett, readers revolted and the magazine returned to their roots. I really would have loved to have seen those letters included here and think it was a mistake omitting them.

In 1989, The Grateful Dead went mainstream with their only hit single "Touch of Grey." That same year, Mick Skidmore gave the first review of an unreleased copy of Junta by Phish, one of the first bands to succeed following the Dead's business model. There's also a very good article about the burgeoning online experience with Deadheads on bulletin boards.

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The magazine also covered the low lights the Deadhead experienced ,evident in the article about the thousands who rioted at a show at the Deer Creek Music Center in Noblesville, Indiana, and of course, the devastating loss of Jerry Garcia in 1995. The remaining band members soldiered on with the Furthur Festival and solo projects and the fans followed, although without the same intensity.

Relix, the Book serves as a very good document for those who want to relive their Dead fandom and for those who missed out and want to see "what a long, strange trip" it was.

Posted by the radman at 1:16 PM 

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the radman

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