



The Newsletter of the

2021

GRATEFUL DEAD STUDIES ASSOCIATION



President's Column

Fifty years ago, the Grateful Dead released their eponymous live album *Skull and Roses*, and Keith Godchaux joined the band, filling in for Ron “Pigpen” McKernan, who had been hospitalized. Both events were testaments to the band’s perseverance in the face of adversity, a stance that felt all the more precarious amidst the larger changes buffeting the nation as the 1960s receded into history. That lesson is always relevant, but it feels especially apt as we continue to deal with the tragic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated convulsions. And just as the Dead shouldered on through a difficult year, so has the Association, achieving several goals since our last newsletter.

In June, we held our first conference as part of the Popular Culture Association (p.4). Although we were disappointed that the pandemic prevented us from meeting in Boston, our online sessions were rigorous and well attended, making ours one of the



Downtown Seattle’s Iconic Skyline

most robust debuts of an area in PCA history. A detailed account of the conference will appear in the first volume of our *Proceedings*, in the final stages of preparation now (p.3). As a principal initiative in our publication program, the *Proceedings* is one of the Association’s major projects. Meetings are the cornerstone of our efforts, and the Executive Council is hard at work preparing for our second conference (p.2), slated to be held in Seattle in April as part of the larger PCA conference. As our first in-person meeting, we’re especially excited to welcome old friends and new; dialogue is the lifeblood of any discourse community, and we’re eager to rekindle our collective conversation in just a few months.

The pandemic has made reading and listening an even bigger part of life this year, and Dead scholars have enjoyed a range of publications, podcasts, and archival releases, a few of which are highlighted here (p.4). One of the most interesting events of the year was an auction of Grateful Dead artifacts by Sotheby’s, which concluded right before this went to press. Though not the first major auction of Grateful Dead artifacts, this was a landmark event, not only for the imprimatur of Sotheby’s, but for range and historicity of the materials, including many consigned by the band. High-end auctions are also an index of cultural heritage, and this marked another significant step of the Dead’s march into history.

The Association’s work maps another part of that march, as this newsletter notes, but that work is only possible with your participation and support. As always, we thank you, and we look forward to seeing you in Seattle in April.

Nicholas G. Meriwether



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Downtown Seattle with Mt. Rainier in the Background

Seattle 2022!

Second Annual Meeting Set for April 13–16

We are excited to announce that our second annual meeting has been confirmed for Seattle, April 13–16, at the Sheraton Seattle Hotel. As in June at our first meeting, the Association's panels comprise the Grateful Dead area of the Popular Culture Association's conference, and we'll have our own events in the evenings as well. Building on the strong showing we had for our first meeting, we are

looking forward to papers and sessions devoted to all aspects of the Dead's work and impact, from composition to reception.

In addition to presentations and panels extending and deepening well-established themes and approaches, we're excited to have received proposals for sessions devoted to new theoretical approaches to the field, and we are actively soliciting additional contributions. Although the pandemic has cut travel budgets and increased the demands on everyone's time, we've been delighted with the

rigor and creativity of the proposals received and we are looking forward to a strong slate of sessions to mark our first in-person meeting.

Information on abstracts and acceptance criteria may be found on the Association's website (<http://deadstudies.org/conference-abstracts-checklist/>). Abstracts are due by **November 15** and should be 150 to 250 words. Registration information and submission details can be found at the PCA website (www.pcaaca.org), which is where abstracts should be submitted. Hotel rooms fill quickly, so once your abstract has been approved, book your room early; participants receive a discount which

can be accessed at the PCA website when you register. All presenters and attendees must register as members of the PCA to participate.

Seattle in April is lovely, but for Dead scholars, the city has a special resonance and appeal. The Dead played Seattle 27 times from 1967 to 1995, performing at a range of venues, from free shows at Volunteer Park in 1967 to epochal shows at Paramount Northwest Theatre in 1972 and 1977. Deadheads mourned when the band outgrew the Paramount, but the nine shows the Dead played at Seattle Center Memorial Coliseum between 1979 and 1995 earned converts and made memories. Fans recall the final show there with particular fondness, defined by perfect weather and a mood so infectious that even security guards danced in the aisles during "Good Lovin'." The band's discography honored Seattle fans by including two shows in the *Pacific Northwest '73-'74* box set: June 26, 1973, at Seattle Center and May 21, 1974, at the University of Washington, both revered by locals.

As this goes to press, PCA administration is actively monitoring the COVID-19 situation to see how it may impact the conference. Should CDC guidelines or local health and safety concerns make an in-person meeting impossible, the conference may move to an online format, which will also likely delay it. We will keep members informed and the PCA will post updates.

Seattle 2022 At A Glance:

- 4 days, April 13–16, 2022
- All sessions held at the Sheraton Seattle Hotel
- Full schedule of panels, speakers and events
- Proposals due *November 15*
- Early (reduced fee) Registration closes *December 31*

Right: Seattle's Volunteer Park, where the Dead played in 1967

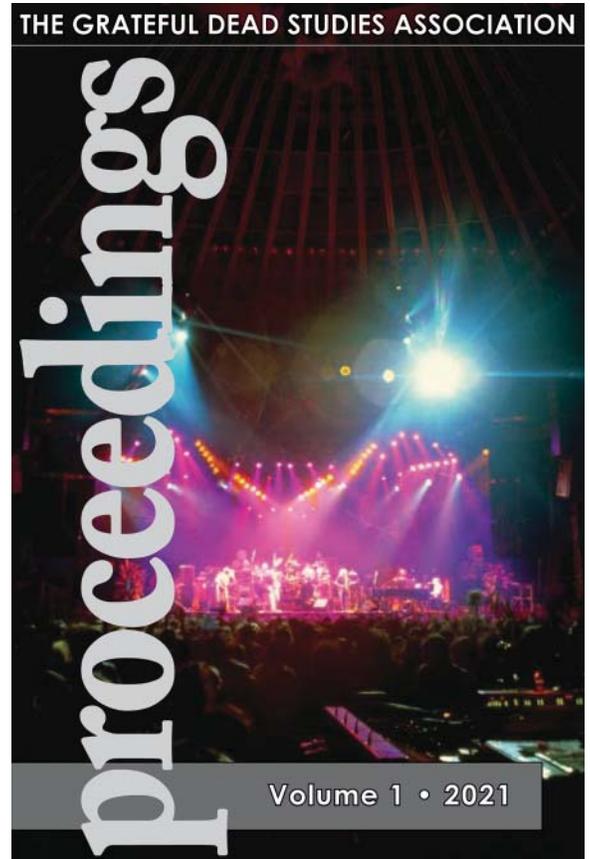


Documenting A Discourse: The Proceedings of the Grateful Dead Studies Association

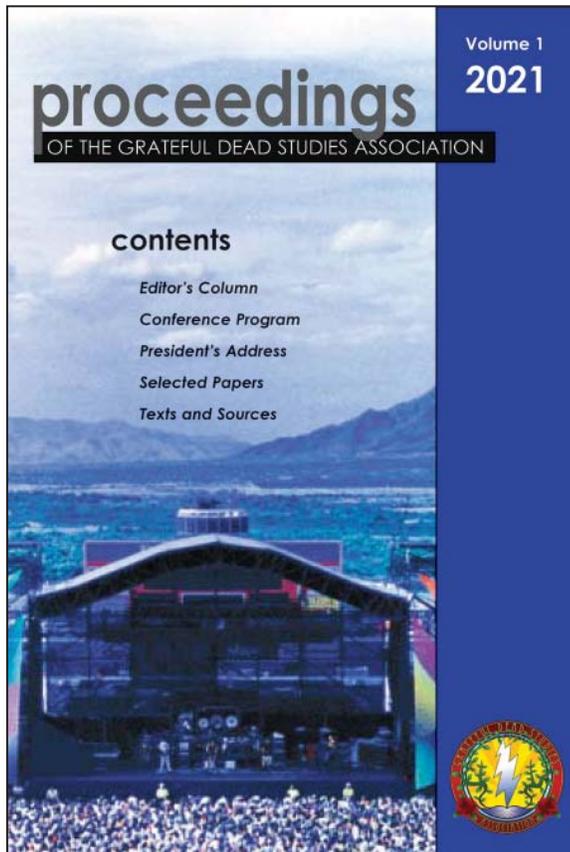
In a few weeks, the Association will celebrate the completion of another major goal, the publication of the inaugural volume of *The Proceedings of the Grateful Dead Studies Association*. As a major initiative of the Association's publications program, the *Proceedings* will supplement the Association's flagship journal *Grateful Dead Studies* by providing a record of our conference meetings, including the final schedule and abstracts as well as selected papers and features.

Scholarly proceedings take many forms, and the scope and content of the Association's was the subject of considerable discussion and debate. For years, scholars have been frustrated by the lack of accurate records of conference meetings that discussed the Dead, which have often been buried in larger conference programs that were difficult to access. More troublesome was the fact that programs appeared before the conference meeting and could not reflect the inevitable last-minute changes that always happen, from cancellations to more subtle but critical alterations to arguments and even entire presentations—every scholar has had the experience of a final paper veering away from what an abstract first promised.

The plan for the *Proceedings* addresses those concerns, but each volume will provide more than just an accurate record of what transpired at our conference meetings. Selected papers will provide a more detailed look at some of the topics and themes that defined the meeting; these



The front and back covers of the *Proceedings*



go through an expedited, single-blind peer review, since authorship is already public. This system provides another mechanism for the Association to make our work accessible and complements the more extensive research articles published in the Association's journal, which go through a more extensive double-blind review.

The Association is an academic organization, but it includes a wide range of readers and enthusiasts; each issue will also include a Texts and Sources section that will appeal to all members. This section will present unpublished or obscure primary works, from interviews to essays, with accompanying commentary. Volume 1 features Robert Hunter's first publication, an almost entirely unknown essay on the Dead's project that literary scholar Chris Coffman located. His thoughtful exegesis situates this forgotten gem in the larger context of the Dead's work as it left its Haight-Ashbury genesis and emerged into maturity.

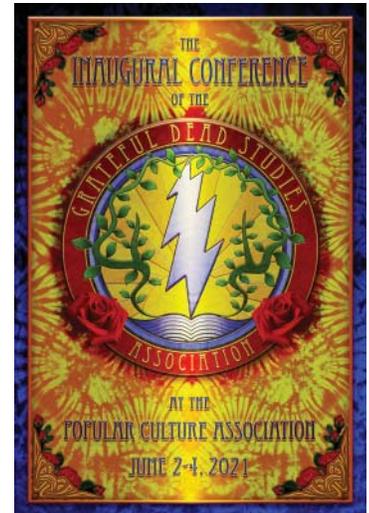
Members and supporters will receive print copies of the *Proceedings* as part of their membership. In keeping with our commitment to making our work accessible, we will also publish the *Proceedings* online and make it accessible at no charge. Sponsors may subsidize individual issues or a run of volumes, which will help with production costs, especially quotation and image license fees. Interested donors can contribute to this project and others at www.deadstudies.org/donate.

New and Noteworthy

Recent Highlights in Grateful Dead Studies

Over the past year, Grateful Dead studies added more than two dozen conference papers, articles, chapters, and books to its steadily expanding bibliography, augmented by several popular efforts, from podcasts to journalism, many of which have featured Association members. In June, the Association held its first meeting, convened online as part of the Popular Culture Association's larger conference. With a wide-ranging slate of 26 papers in 11 sessions, including two roundtable discussions, this was one of the strongest area debuts in the organization's history, earning the Association high marks from PCA administrators and attracting several new members. In February, the Southwest Popular/American Culture Association held its forty-second annual conference, which featured more than a dozen papers in its Grateful Dead area. Several Association members participated, honoring the area's long history as a forum for Dead studies.

Association member Randolph Jordan's chapter, "Listening from the Empty Booth: Performing the Grateful Dead Community in *Long Strange Trip*," was published in *Mapping the Rockumentary: Images of Sound and Fury*, edited by Gunnar Iversen and Scott MacKenzie and released by Edinburgh University Press in May. Jordan's essay builds on work he has presented at the Grateful Dead area of the Southwest Popular/American Culture Association, as does Association Vice President Kurt Torell's book, *Rock and Roll, Social Protest, and Authenticity: Historical, Philosophical, and Cultural Explorations*. Published in November by Lexington as part of its series For the Record: Studies in Rock and Popular Music, Torell's book takes on the perennial issue of the complex connection between medium and message in rock music.



Association charter member Susan Balter-Reitz launched the radio show and podcast "The Dead of Night" on NPR's Yellowstone Public Radio (<https://www.ypradio.org/show/the-dead-of-night>) on January 8. Drawing on her background in rhetoric and communications, Balter-Reitz's thoughtful exploration of the Dead includes the scholarship on the phenomenon, and the 33 episodes to date have included interviews with several Association members, including Beth Carroll, Mary Goodenough, and Deepak Sarma. Rhino's official "Good Ol' Grateful Dead" podcast has also featured a number of Association members over its three seasons, including Stanley Krippner, Shaugn O'Donnell, Michael Parrish, and Alex Allan, with more scheduled as the year winds down.

Other efforts are less obvious but no less vital. The Grateful Dead Studies collection at Northwestern University, reported on in the last newsletter, added two fully processed series, with more underway. University Librarian Sarah M. Pritchard thanked the Association for the donations, hailing the collection as "a great enhancement to our increasingly deep resources for the study of the 'long 1960s'." In September, Association President Nicholas Meriwether met with Curator Scott Krafft, who also serves on the Association Advisory Board, and Processing Archivist Benn Joseph; their wide-ranging discussion outlined several exciting initiatives the collection can support, from student research projects

to teaching resources, exhibitions, and publications.

That effort is part of the increasing visibility of the Dead as an academic subject. This fall, both Duke and CUNY offered successful, well-attended classes on the band, and members of the Association provided assistance and made guest appearances. As Dead studies continues to attract scholars, the Association's work is increasingly consulted, not only as a resource but also as an example. Plans are in development to add a series of course syllabi to the Grateful Dead Studies collection as part of its mission to document the field.

Although 2021 has been a daunting year, it is heartening to see the continued progress of our work and the range of publications and engagements by our members. Clinical psychologist Adam Brown, an Association member who directs the Trauma and Global Mental Health Lab at the New School for Social Research, has studied how Deadhead culture has provided fans with coping mechanisms that have helped them navigate the pandemic, and the Association's work is an example of that resilience and spirit. We wish all of our members good health and continued determination as we all look forward to a brighter 2022.

The Newsletter of the Grateful Dead Studies Association, Volume 3 (2021).

Published annually by the Grateful Dead Studies Association.

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