



Grateful Dead Studies Association

*Fifth Annual Meeting
New Orleans 2025*

POPULAR CULTURE ASSOCIATION / AMERICAN CULTURE ASSOCIATION
55TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE • NEW ORLEANS MARRIOTT • APRIL 16–19, 2025

THE FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING

of the

GRATEFUL DEAD STUDIES ASSOCIATION

at the

FIFTY-FIFTH PCA/ACA CONFERENCE

April 16~19, 2025

New Orleans Marriott

New Orleans, Louisiana

Grateful Dead Area Committee

Susan Balter-Reitz

Granville Ganter

Nicholas G. Meriwether

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Dear Members, Presenters, and Guests,

Welcome to the Big Easy and the fifth annual meeting of the Grateful Dead Studies Association! This year's conference features fifteen sessions with thirty-five presenters from across the US and Canada. With thirty-one papers and three roundtable discussions, our section is one of the largest in the conference, reflecting the robust nature of the interdisciplinary scholarly conversation about the Grateful Dead phenomenon.

We are grateful to the Popular Culture Association for hosting the Grateful Dead area, which provides the Association with a forum to present our work to an international audience. Several donors helped make this meeting possible: the Brittingham Family Foundation, Rhino Entertainment Co., High Moon Records, Random House, The Capitol Theatre, Sky Yellow/Sun Blue LLC, Duke University Press, and Perfectible Recordings. We thank them for their generosity and support. Nicole Freim, PCA Vice President, provided invaluable assistance with our schedule and Association member Steve Midway offered expert help with local logistics.

This program provides the schedule for the Grateful Dead sessions. It reflects the most current information at the time this went to print; the final record of the conference will be published in the next volume of our *Proceedings*, which will document any last-minute changes that may occur after this goes to press. All members receive a print copy of the *Proceedings* and we will make the contents available at no cost on our website, www.deadstudies.org.

We thank all of our members for their support, and we especially thank our presenters and session chairs for their hard work to make this historic meeting a success. We look forward to seeing everyone in 2026 for our sixth conference!

Sincerely,

Susan Balter-Reitz
President

schedule

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16

Session 1 (9:45–11:15 a.m.)

Studio 9

Religion and Spirituality in the Grateful Dead Phenomenon

Chair: Deepak Sarma

Jeff Zittrain, “‘Take You to the Leader of the Band’: Concepts of a Higher Power in the Grateful Dead.”

Luke Sisung, “‘Paradise Waits’: Exploring the Spiritual Literacy Practices in and around the Grateful Dead.”

Deepak Sarma, “Religious Studies Methodologies in the Study of the Grateful Dead.”

Session 2 (11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.)

Studio 9

The Grateful Dead and Performance: Issues and Implications

Chair: G. Ganter

Stephanie Young and Clive Worsley, “‘Since the End is Never Told’: Phil Lesh and the Future of the Grateful Dead Songbook.”

Michael Nadler, “1977.”

Note: This panel had a cancellation.

Session 3 (1:15–2:45 p.m.)

Studio 9

Robert M. Petersen and the Grateful Dead

Chair: Nathaniel Racine

Christopher Coffman, “The Eco-poetics of Robert M. Petersen.”

Nicholas Meriwether, “‘Searching for the Secret’: Bobby Petersen’s Lyrics for the Grateful Dead.”

Nathaniel Racine, “Robert M. Petersen, Nature Writing, and Regionalism.”

Session 4 (3:00–4:30 p.m.)

Studio 9

A History of the Dead in Concert: A Roundtable Discussion with Ray Robertson

Chair: Susan Balter-Reitz

Panelists: Ray Robertson, Peter Richardson, Jay Williams

Happy Hour (5:00 p.m.–)

TBA

Members, presenters, and guests are invited to gather for libations to mark the opening of our fifth meeting. We will confirm details after Session 4.

schedule

THURSDAY, APRIL 17

Session 5 (8:00–9:30 a.m.)

Studio 9

Legal and Political Dimensions of the Grateful Dead

Chair: Paul Collins

Nicole Brown, “‘Somebody Has to Do Something’: The Currency of the Grateful Dead’s 1988 Call to Protect Rainforests.”

Andrew McGaan, “‘Set Up Like A Bowling Pin’: The Legal Dimensions of the Grateful Dead’s 1970 New Orleans Arrest.”

Paul Collins, “‘Busted Down on Bourbon Street’: Investigating the Depiction of Law in Grateful Dead Lyrics.”

Session 6 (9:45–11:15 a.m.)

Studio 9

Technology and the Grateful Dead

Chair: Davis Schneiderman

Noah Franken, “Dead Tapes: The Medium is the Message.”

Matthew Armstrong, “Snowden, Brand, and Barlow: The Long Strange Trip from Counterculture to Cyberculture.”

Davis Schneiderman, “‘Light the Song with Sense and Color’: Burroughs, the Grateful Dead, and AI at the Las Vegas Sphere.”

Session 7 (1:15–2:45 p.m.)

Studio 9

Musicological Contexts of the Grateful Dead

Chair: Brian Felix

Alfredo Guerrieri, “‘Unbroken Chain’: Phil Lesh and Counterpoint in the Music of the Grateful Dead.”

Brian Felix, “‘The [Tone] Wheel is Turning’: The Hammond Organ, the Grateful Dead, and 1960s Rock.”

Graeme Boone, “‘Gravity’s Rainbow Meets the Scarlet Groove.’”

Session 8 (3:00–4:30 p.m.)

Studio 9

Grateful Dead Fellows Roundtable

Chair: Susan Balter-Reitz

Panelists: Barry Barnes, Nicholas Meriwether

Reception (5:30 p.m. –)

The Lighthouse

743 Camp Street (at Julia Street)

Please join us for drinks and appetizers to celebrate our fifth meeting and honor our first Fellow with an exclusive exhibition preview of the Sky Yellow/Sun Blue art project by Association member Steven R. Hurlburt.

schedule

FRIDAY, APRIL 18

Session 9 (9:45–11:15 a.m.)

Studio 9

Art and Fashion in the Grateful Dead

Chair: Annabelle Walsh

Susie Silbert, “From Shakedown to the Museum: Glass Art Pipes and the World of the Dead.”

Kenneth Hartvigsen, “‘These Things our Eyes Have Seen’: Approaching a Grateful Dead Iconology.”

Annabelle Walsh, “‘Some Come to Laugh Their Past Away’: Memetic Logic and Aesthetics of Bootleg Grateful Dead T-Shirts.”

Session 10 (11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.)

Studio 9

Roots and Contexts of the Grateful Dead’s Music

Chair: Steven Garabedian

Jayne Stone, “‘Swinging Along’ in the Unpredictable: The Grateful Dead Concert as an Emergent Phenomenon.”

Steven Garabedian, “Of It, But Not In It: The Grateful Dead and Folk Revivalism.”

Note: This panel had a cancellation.

Session 11 (1:15–2:45 p.m.)

Studio 9

Media, Recordings and History in the Grateful Dead Phenomenon

Chair: Granville Ganter

Peter Richardson, “A Signpost to New Spaces: Jerry Garcia’s *Rolling Stone* Interview and Its Aftermath.”

Jay Williams, “What College Students Heard When the Grateful Dead Played.”

Granville Ganter, “Neal Cassady’s Raps, Gesture, and the Music of the Grateful Dead.”

Session 12 (3:00–4:30 p.m.)

Studio 9

Roundtable: “Prepare Yourself to Be Open”: In Memoriam Phil Lesh

Chair: Chad Jenkins

Panelists: Graeme Boone, Chad Jenkins, Brian Felix, Shaugn O’Donnell

GDSA Happy Hour and Concert (5:00 p.m.–)

TBA

We will meet informally for drinks and dinner before heading out to hear Sup erdome Bodhi, New Orleans’ famed Grateful Dead band, at Café Istanbul, 2372 St. Claude Avenue.

schedule

SATURDAY, APRIL 19

Session 13 (8:00–9:30 a.m.)

Studio 9

Robert Hunter's World

Chair: Nicholas Cross

Jeffrey Aulgur, "Robert Hunter's 'A Red Dog Decoration's Day': A Historical and Biographical Literary Analysis."

Jesse Jarnow, "Ringing the Silent Bell: The Secret Robert Hunter."

Nicholas Cross, "Fire on the Mountain: Jerry Garcia and Alan Trist's Vesuvius Play."

Session 14 (9:45–11:15 a.m.)

Studio 9

Musicology of the Grateful Dead

Chair: Rich Pettengill

Chad Jenkins, "'Strangest I Could Find': The Common-Tone Diminished Seventh in the Grateful Dead."

Shaun O'Donnell, "'Beneath the Calm Face of the Sea': Aggregate Completion in 'Crazy Fingers'."

Rich Pettengill, "The Evolution of the Grateful Dead's 'Hard to Handle' Jam: Inclusivity and Shifting Structure."

Session 15 (1:15–2:45 p.m.)

Studio 9

Grateful Dead Studies Association Annual Meeting

Welcome *Deepak Sarma*

Keynote Address:

"'Can't Hear the Song for the Singer': Cynical Commodification and the Grateful Dead Audience."

Susan Balter-Reitz

Executive Council Reports *Susan Balter-Reitz, Natalie Dollar, Granville Ganter, Nicholas Meriwether, Deepak Sarma*

Discussion

Closing Reception (5:30 p.m.–)

The Lighthouse

743 Camp Street (at Julia Street)

Members, presenters, and guests are invited to join us for drinks to celebrate the conclusion of the Association's fifth annual meeting.

presenters

Matthew C. Armstrong *North Carolina A&T State University*
Jeffrey Aulgur *Arkansas Tech University*
Susan Balter-Reitz *Montana State University–Billings*
Barry Barnes *Nova Southeastern University, emer.*
Graeme M. Boone *Ohio State University*
Nicole Brown *Western Washington University*
Christopher K. Coffman *Boston University*
Paul M. Collins, Jr. *University of Massachusetts–Amherst*
Nicholas D. Cross *United States Naval Academy*
Brian Felix *University of North Carolina–Asheville*
Noah Franken *West Texas A&M University*
Granville Ganter *St. John's University*
Steven Garabedian *Marist College*
Alfredo Guerrieri *Cuyahoga Community College*
Kenneth Hartvigsen *Brigham Young University*
Jesse Jarnow *Good Ol' Grateful Deadcast*
Chadwick Jenkins *City College, City University of New York*
Andrew R. McGaan *Kirkland & Ellis LLP*
Nicholas G. Meriwether *Grateful Dead Studies Association*
Michael Nadler *Albuquerque Academy, emer.*
Shaughn O'Donnell *City College, City University of New York*
Richard Pettengill *Lake Forest University*
Nathaniel R. Racine *Texas A&M International University*
Peter Richardson *San Francisco State University*
Ray Robertson *Independent Scholar*
Deepak Sarma *Case Western Reserve University*
Davis Schneiderman *Lake Forest University*
Susie Silbert *Independent Scholar*
Luke Sisung *Michigan State University*
Jayne E. O. Stone *University of Cincinnati*
Annabelle J. Walsh *Parsons School of Design*
Jay Williams *University of Chicago Press, ret.*
Clive Worsley *Independent Scholar*
Stephanie Young *Mills College at Northeastern University*
Jeffrey Zittrain *Chabot College*

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DEAN SMITH
STEVEN R. HURLBURT
DAVID GANS
SUSAN BALTER-REITZ
GRANVILLE GANTER
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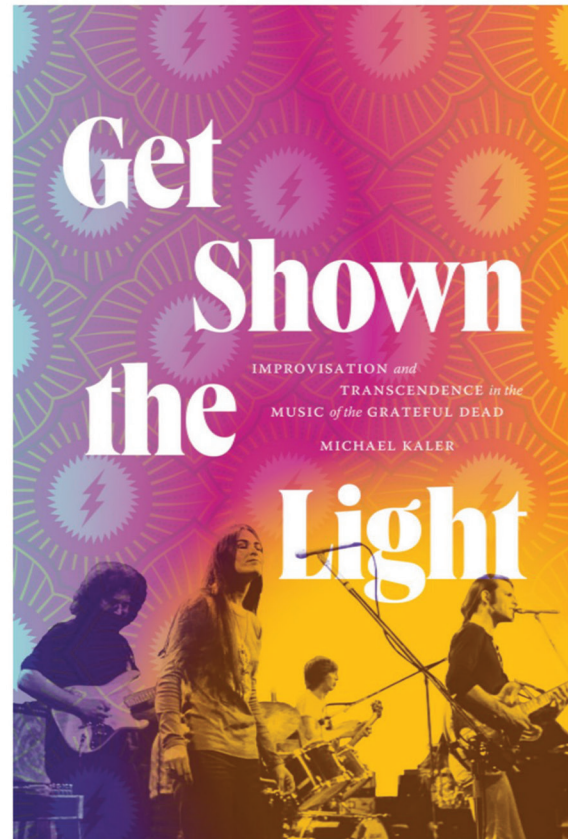
STUDIES IN THE GRATEFUL DEAD



Live Dead

The Grateful Dead, Live Recordings,
and the Ideology of Liveness

JOHN BRACKETT



Get Shown the Light

Improvisation and Transcendence in
the Music of the Grateful Dead

MICHAEL KALER

*COMING
SPRING 2026*

Perchance to Dream

The Grateful Dead, the Literary
Fragment, and the Limits of Philosophy

CHRISTOPHER K. COFFMAN



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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
GRATEFUL DEAD STUDIES ASSOCIATION
ON YOUR FIFTH ANNIVERSARY MEETING. LATVALA!

Congratulations

GRATEFUL DEAD STUDIES ASSOCIATION

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HERE BESIDE THE RISING TIDE

JERRY GARCIA, THE GRATEFUL DEAD,
AND AN AMERICAN AWAKENING

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THE RISING TIDE

JERRY GARCIA,
THE GRATEFUL DEAD,
AND AN AMERICAN
AWAKENING

JIM NEWTON

COMING
8.5.2025

A history of the Grateful Dead and an examination of
American counterculture through the life of Jerry Garcia

