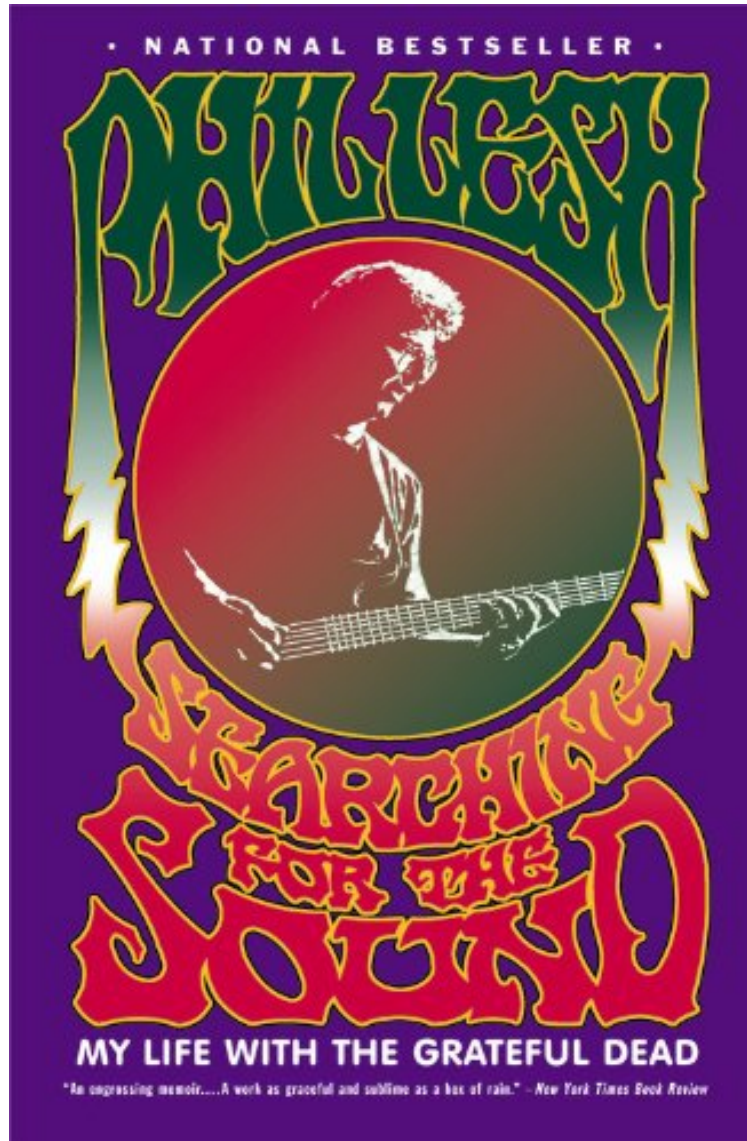


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## Searching for the Sound: My Life with the Grateful Dead

*Phil Lesh*

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**Phil Lesh : Searching for the Sound: My Life with the Grateful Dead** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Searching for the Sound: My Life with the Grateful Dead:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Insightful, Psychedelic and RevealingBy Joe 52An intimate autobiography of the author's life focusing on the birth and evolution of the Grateful Dead and his relationship with other band members, especially Jerry Garcia. In describing his development as a musician, composer and performer,

Lesh writes intellectually in a technological style that was at times difficult for this musical layman to follow. However this book is a very rewarding read, especially for anyone wishing to learn about or to relive the phantasmagorical events that occurred in and around the 1960's San Francisco psychedelic rock scene and beyond. A must read for Deadheads and wannabes, Lesh's incredible attention to detail leaves the reader gratified and craving for more. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A great read. By William Donnelly When this book was first published in hardcover I read it in one sitting. Lesh is my favorite member of the Dead, with Pigpen and Jerry being tied for second. I feel that this book is very well written, fascinating and informative. What especially stands out for me is the actual TONE of Phil's writing; he comes across as compassionate and caring. Even when being critical of a person or group of people, he does so in a very kind manner (in contrast to the tone of Bill Kreutzmann's recently published autobiography, of which I will be posting a review soon). Our son Phillip is named after him (my best DeadHead friend at the time and I didn't really give my wife any choice in the matter!). 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. It's about the Music of the Spheres By Marty G. Price I've been a bit of a Dead fan since I first heard Workingman's Dead, not that long after it was released. I've not that much of a musical ear and was originally engaged by one element of the music -- Robert Hunter's lyrics. Phil Lesh spends about the first 2/3 of the book talking about the music, explaining the Dead's innovative approach to concerts and to recording, and showing me a side to the Dead's creative process I just hadn't thought much about. That 2/3 of the book, chronologically taking us past the European tour and Pigpen McKernon's death, is great. That portion of the book lives up to the book's very apt title. There are moments when Lesh manages to communicate something of the magic, the mystery and the 'cosmic consciousness' {yes, I just used that wornout expression; no, Lesh doesn't} to be glimpsed at in the sound. The last third of the book, taking us through Jerry Garcia's death and, quite briefly, up to date, is significantly weaker. The book becomes more an account of the band's ups and downs and less a delving into the sense and spirit of the music. The band did produce some good, new songs in those later years (I'll particularly note Hunter and Garcia's "Black Muddy River"), but Lesh has far less to say about those later touring years than the early experimental ones. Perhaps there just is less worth saying about being an anachronistic 'hippie' band in the '80s than standing in the middle of the brief cultural flowering of the late '60s. I was particularly impressed that the book really was Lesh's story -- no ghostwriter, no tell-tale tracks of either a publicist or an outsider's voice. He's written a good, honest book. The book isn't about being a star, nor is it about the lifestyle. The book is about making music, just as the band was about making music. Read it for the music.

In this ruthlessly honest bestseller, the bass player for the greatest improvisational band in American history tells the full, true story of his life, Jerry Garcia, and the Grateful Dead. of photos.

.com Right in time for the Grateful Dead's 40th anniversary, eccentric bass player extraordinaire Phil Lesh has delivered fans a most welcome gift: his autobiography. There are many books out there about the Dead told from the perspective of roadies, journalists, third party observers, and fans. However, with the exceptions of Jerry Garcia's ramblings in *Garcia: A Signpost to New Space* and *Conversations With the Dead*, Lesh's *Searching for the Sound* is the first time a founding member of America's favorite band tells their own story of what it was like inside the Grateful Dead. And what a wonderful, strange tale it is. Phil Lesh, considered the most academic of the group due to his avant-garde classical composition training, literate mind, and passion for the arts, decided to write his story himself. Written without the crutch of a ghostwriter, *Searching for the Sound* might be considered disjointed in places, but overall it comes across as conversational, intimate, informative, and candid (particularly regarding topics of drug use and death). If you are familiar with the band and their extended family, their history, the sixties' musical milestones and influences and all the band's famous tales (the Garcia/ Lesh "silent" confrontation, being busted on Bourbon Street, the Wall of Sound), you may be a little disgruntled there is not much new here in the way of content. However, what is "new" and totally satisfying is Phil's warm, optimistic perspective on the many events that helped shape his life. As described by Lesh, his life's journey, much like the Dead's music, is "a [series] of recurring themes, transpositions, repetitions, unexpected developments, all converging to define form that is not necessarily apparent until it's ending has come and gone." For the many fans who enjoyed the fruits of his life pursuit of sonic explorations, *Searching for the Sound* is a welcome addition to their Dead library. --Rob Bracco From Publishers Weekly Grateful Dead bassist Phil Lesh has written the memoir one might have expected: energetic and flawed, but sure to be loved by fans. Lesh joined the band's original members Jerry Garcia, Bob Weir, Bill Kreutzman and "Pigpen" Ron McKernan in 1965 and helped morph the legendary outfit from its beginnings as a jug band to the unique, psychedelic improvisational jam band that spawned arguably the most loyal, iconic audience in popular music history: the Deadheads. What a long, strange trip it was. For 30-plus years, from being the house band for Ken Kesey's acid tests to stadium tours in the 1980s and '90s, the band pioneered a new paradigm for musicians, operating as an extended, albeit dysfunctional, family. Along the way, three keyboardists died, two managers robbed the band, bad deals were signed, massive debt was accrued and drug and alcohol problems flared. In 1995, the trip finally ended (or did it?), when Garcia died. Lesh infuses his prose with his wacky personality, which is endearing, but also maddening, especially when he's rendering acid trips or

discussing music. Indeed, many fans who twirled ecstatically at Dead shows will struggle to follow Lesh's extended explanations of the band's compositions. Also, the second half of the band's life gets short shrift. Nevertheless, Deadheads will surely celebrate Lesh's honest, intimate remembrances. (Apr.) From Booklist

Lesh, founding member of the Grateful Dead and bass-guitar visionary, adds his biography and his take on Dead history to the burgeoning literature about the band that is famous for its devoted fans, for keeping the spirit of the psychedelic sixties alive, and for rarely recording a commercial hit. After covering his childhood at a blistering pace (by page 12, he has flunked his army induction physical), Lesh turns his attention to matters musical, including meeting original Dead keyboardist Ron "Pigpen" McKernan, who seemed "greasy" but performed a "raucous blues stomp," and then encountering the rest of the Dead gang, not to mention psychedelized novelist Ken Kesey and sundry other sixties notables. He rehashes some notorious incidents in the band's annals, such as when in 1970 at the infamous Altamont free concert, the Dead refused to take the stage because they were scared; the atmosphere there was so unsettling, Lesh says, that he decided "not to take any acid that day"--given how things turned out (a tripping spectator was murdered by the Hell's Angels "security guards"), fortunate forbearance on his part. Lesh also recounts the subsequent comings and goings of band members, the death of Jerry Garcia, and life as a more mature presence on the rock landscape. Very few bands stay together as long as the Dead has, and fewer still attract new fans. A literate piece of rock history by a genuinely historic figure in rock music. Mike Tribby

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