

Deadhead In Paradise



by Pam Fitzpatrick

The Grateful Dead are a band you cannot fully appreciate until you see them live. With this in mind, I decided to see for myself why the Dead are a cult that has been followed by 'Deadheads' for the past 28 years. Twenty-one people and I traveled to Boston last Thursday to see the Dead's final show of the fall tour at the Boston Gardens.

Watching and mingling with the crowds before a Dead show is almost as exciting as the show itself. The diversity of people there is amazing. People are walking around holding signs, begging to buy a ticket. People will give anything to get a ticket for the show. Two hundred dollars was nothing to some for a Dead ticket. The feeling of anticipation before the show is phenomenal. It doesn't matter if it's your first show or your hundredth, - you are about to embark on one of the greatest touring shows of the twentieth century. There are tie dyes by the thousands, Dead Heads carrying their children on their backs, vans painted with signs offering body piercing, bootleg shirts, stickers, and any other kind of paraphernalia you would expect to find at a Dead show. I was overwhelmed and amazed at the peaceful chaos of the crowd. I can't even imagine a fight breaking out at a scene like that.

The show started promptly at 7:30, and almost everyone stayed on their feet the whole time. The peak of the show occurred during the second set of the show after a forty-five minute break. The Dead's

version of "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" had the crowd in a frenzy. Not one person was sitting down at the end of the song. The second set also introduced me to my first experience of "space." During "space" anything and everything can happen. It is a structureless jam that sends everyone on their own trip. After, a 25 minute drum roll and spectacular light show takes the crowd into an adventure of spirituality like nothing I've ever seen. The great thing about a Dead Show is no matter where you are, you get a different yet awesome perspective of the show. People on the floor dance continuously and spin. People in the balconies witness the light show that has made the Dead famous for their skeleton, bear, and tie-dyed images. Probably the best part of the show for me was "Fade Away" The Dead lifted the song to an elevation so high, then left it up to the crowd to continue it. The rhythm of the crowd dancing, clapping, and singing in unison bounced off the walls, adding more intensity to the song and crowd.

The general feeling of the crowd didn't end after the show. People left in states of euphoria, perhaps exhaustion, but definitely not in disappointment. The Grateful Dead seem to have a power that creates an awesome spirituality in their audience. It is quite an experience to be part of something that is so powerful and so important to so many people. If you ever get the chance to see a live Dead Show definitely go. My thanks go to Todd and Steve for making this possible for our group.



For all you deadheads out there:

Jerry Garcia Band

November 9, 1993

Cumberland County Arena

Portland, Maine

